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ASPECTS  
*of*  
SHAH ISMAIL SHAHEED



ASPECTS OF  
SHAH ISMAIL SHAHEED

ESSAYS ON HIS LITERARY  
POLITICAL & RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

*Edited by*

ABDULLAH BUTT

SECRETARY

*All-Punjab Muslim Students Federation*



1943

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## PREFACE

The All-Punjab Muslim Students Federation undertook the presentation of Islamic heroes. This purpose was achieved by the celebration of the memories of those heroes and later on publishing authentic accounts of their life-histories. This organisation of the Muslim students was the first in India to celebrate the Tipu Shaheed Day. Soon after, prominent scholars and historians were approached with a request for contributions on the life of Tipu, the standard-bearer of liberty, equality and fraternity. These contributions were published in the form of a book.

The present volume is the collection of papers in English read on the occasion of "Shah Ismail Shaheed Day". The celebrations were to be presided over by His late Highness Al-Hajj Nawab Sir Muhammad Nasir-ul-Mulk, Mehtar of Chitral. But due to unavoidable circumstances His Highness could not attend the celebrations and had to fly back home from Delhi. His Highness, however, sent us the following telegraphic message to associate himself with the occasion :—

"Sorry, had to fly back as it was imperative. I congratulate you on celebrating Ismail Shaheed Day who I think was one of the most outstanding personalities in the history of Islam. May God give you the courage and foresight to follow in the

footsteps of that great son of India.”

In the absence of His Highness the Mehtar, the first session was presided over by Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, and the second session by Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maudoodi. The occasion attracted record audiences.

Political servitude is a crushing calamity, and the tragedy of the Indian Musalmans is not only physical slavery but also mental suppression. The process of degeneration with a *Millat*, which brought the message of liberty and equality long before the French Revolution, was unusually rapid. They set aside the glorious tradition of Islam which is the truest message of democracy and human equality, and forgot those who worked political, cultural and religious revolution in the society.

Shah Ismail Shaheed and Sayyid Ahmad Brelvi, giants in the life of the spirit as they were and possessing as they did the will to rise in revolt against the current of history and endeavour to turn it into a different channel, would have occupied a very high place and do occupy an honoured place in the history of Islam. It is not for nothing that their memory is held in honour and reverence in the whole of Muslim India. The All-Punjab Muslim Students' Federation rightly feel proud that the honour of celebrating the memory of these great sons of Islam fell to them.

I whole-heartedly thank Dr. Baqir, Dr. Khalid, Prof. Abdul Qayyum, Mirza Abdullah Anwar Beg and Maulana Saeed Ahmad, who complied with my request in spite of

their multifarious professional and educational activities. Thanks are also due to Dr. B. A. Kuraishi who was so kind as to write the Foreword. The All-Punjab Muslim Students' Federation always found in him a friend and a guide.

Mr. F. K. Khan Durrani has very kindly read the proofs.

It is a matter of sadness to record that His Highness the Mehtar of Chitral is no longer with us. His Highness took a keen interest in the affairs of the All-Punjab Muslim Students' Federation. May his soul rest in peace.

13, Brandreth Road,  
Lahore.

ABDULLAH BUTT

*15th August, 1943.*



# FOREWORD

*by*

**DR. B. A. KURAISHI**

*M.A., Ph.D. (Berlin)*

*Head of the Arabic Department, Punjab University.*



## FOREWORD

The present volume represents a collection of papers read on the occasion of "Maulana Ismail Shaheed Day" celebrated in the Habibia Hall, Lahore, in 1941, under the auspices of the All-Punjab Muslim Students' Federation.

Why the Federation chose Maulana Ismail Shaheed out of a galaxy of Muslim heroes will be easily apparent to those who happen to read this volume. By the end of the eighteenth century the Muslim world had sunk to the lowest depth of its decrepitude, and India was no exception to it. Nowhere were there any signs of health and vigour; everywhere were stagnation and decay. Political Islam lay hopelessly prostrate. As for religion, it was as decadent as every thing else. The pure monotheism preached by the Prophet of Islam had become overlaid with a rank growth of superstitions, and the moral precepts of the Koran had begun to be ignored and even defied. In this dark hour the Maulana raised his powerful voice and called the Faithful back to the true path. This puritan reformer kindled a fire which soon spread to the remotest corners of India, purifying Islam of its sloth and reviving the zeal and fervour of olden days. The aim of this 'Islamic Revival' was the reform of abuses, the abolition of superstitious practices, and a return to the pristine purity of Islam. All later

accretions were severely condemned, the pure monotheism of Islam was preached in all its uncompromising simplicity, and the Koran and 'Sunnah' were taken as the sole guide for Muslim conduct.

The Maulana, who had perfect faith in Islam as a living moral force, fought for the realisation of a high ideal. This ideal shaped and determined his whole outlook on life, and in trying to realise it he made the supreme sacrifice—he laid down his life and achieved immortality ;—

بنا کردند خوش رسیں بخاک و خون غلظیدن  
خدا رحمت کند این عاشقان پاک طینت را

I should be failing in my duty if I did not offer my sincere thanks to the All-Punjab Muslim Students' Federation, and especially to its energetic and capable Secretary, Mr. Abdullah Butt, for having inaugurated this series of Muslim National Heroes.

Savoy Hotel,  
Mussoorie,  
15th August, 1943

B. A. KURAISHI.



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IN MEMORY OF  
SHAH ISMAIL SHAHEED

*by*

HIS LATE HIGHNESS  
NAWAB SIR MUHAMMAD NASIR-UL-MULK  
*Mehar of Chitral*



## دریاد شاہ اسد عیل شہید

اے قلم بنویس حالاتِ شے	ثانیش پیدا نہ شد بعدش کے
ہندیانِ خفته را بیدار کرد	بندگانِ نفس را احرار کرد
خونِ خود را در گمہ و کسار ریخت	لیک بیخِ حریت در ہند بیخت
اے ذبیحِ اللہ اسماعیلِ ما	شد ندایتِ صورِ اسرافیلِ ما
درِ رہِ حق تیز چون بشتافتی	عادے دوراں خود را یافتی
شرک و بدعت را ز بنِ برکنده	گلشنِ دین را طراوت دادہ
ہمچو مجنوں خویشتن را سوختی	شیوہ عشاقِ نجد آموختی
اندر اں وقتے کہ در ہندوستان	سنتِ اندر آبرِ بدعت بد نہاں
گفت اسماعیلِ معبودم خداست	پیشوائے من محمد مصطفیٰ است
ترک بہ رسمے کہ در اسلام نیست	کم بہ آن شیوہ کہ در احکام نیست
مرف کردہ بیمدہ دولت چرا	مے خری خسراں تو اندر دوسرے

برتر از مشرک کے گمراہ نیست	شرک را در دینِ احمد راہ نیست
شاہرا ہست جانبِ دارالبوار	شرک اندر علم و اندر اختیار
قبر کے کس را بہ بخشد آبروی	حاجتِ خود را تو از خالق بجوی
پس بگیر عبرت ز احکامِ خدا	آں نداند تا مگس راند ز جا
أَنَّكَ لَا تَسْمَعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بخوار	تو دریں گفتار اند رشک ممان

A WARRIOR SCHOLAR OF  
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

*by*

DR. MUHAMMAD BAQIR

*M.A., Ph.D. (London)*

*Oriental College, Lahore*





## MAULAVĪ SHĀH MUḤAMMAD ISMĀ'IL

### *Indian Muslims in the Nineteenth Century*

SINCE the days of خلافت راشدہ (The Orthodox Khilāfat) Islam has produced very few Muslims of the real Islamic type and puritans like Maulavī Shāh Muḥammad Ismā'il have been even fewer. When we consider the state of affairs of the Indian Muslims in the first half of the nineteenth century, it seems surprising that from this nation rose men gifted with such a surpassing degree of religious acumen and illumination that for the time being they swept the masses off their feet with their religious zeal, and drawing them out of the dark ignorance, in which the Indian Muslims had submerged themselves, led them to those modes of religious exercise which are believed by the most orthodox Muslims to have an influence in purifying and strengthening the higher orders of human minds, and which enabled them, even in life, to attain to the most exalted state of spiritual dignity and power. Indian Muslims of that time, like some of the present-day Muslims, were divided in peculiar divisions, which prevailed (and still prevail) among those who aspired to the honours of religious initiation. Some belonged to the Qādirī sect, which traces its origin to 'Abdul Qādir of Gilān, and others associated themselves with the Naqshbandī sect, which is composed of the followers of Khwāja Bahāuddīn Naqshband, a native of Bukhārā. A third group attached itself to Chishtī sect,

which is named after its founder Khwāja Mu'inuddīn Chishtī, whose tomb is at Ajmer. These divisions had disintegrated the unity of Muslims, and after the decay of the Mughal rule they had even lost the prestige of being labelled as a mass of homogeneous *millat*. Besides the political and social decay the religious differences were rampant amongst them. Foreigners as well as non-Muslim Indians were making use of this opportunity and no stone was left unturned to heap humiliation and disgrace on the head of this scattered community. A Maulavī of Qanauj has painfully recorded the plight of Muslims of those days in his book '*Targhībul Jihād*.'<sup>1</sup> 'The tribe of Sikhs,' he says, 'have long held sway in Lahore and other places. Their oppressions have excelled all limits. Thousands of Muslims they have unjustly killed, and on thousands have they heaped disgrace. The *azān*, or summons to prayer, and the killing of cows, they have entirely prohibited.' Malcolm<sup>2</sup> speaking of the period when the British army under Lord Lake pursued Holkar into the Panjab, in 1805, has supported the view of this Maulavī, who very deftly in a few words has described the existing condition of Muslims in India. Against all those factions and innovations, which had ultimately led the Muslims to this hopeless state of confusion and disgrace, there rose a great man of his times, Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il whose revered memory we have gathered here to celebrate to-day.

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<sup>1</sup> J.A.S.B., 1832, vol. i, 482.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

*Birth and early life, 1196 A.H./1781 A.D. to  
1212 A.H./1797 A.D.*

Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il was the nephew <sup>1</sup> of the famous Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, whose family is still universally held in great veneration and respect all over India. He was the only son of 'Abdul Ghanī, son of Shāh Waliullah, the most celebrated traditionist and the best student of divinity of his time. Shāh Waliullah had four sons; viz., the father of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il, Maulavī 'Abdul 'Azīz, Rafi'uddīn, and 'Abdul Qādir. They were all famous for their literary attainments and religious characters. The family traces its pedigree to 'Umar, the second *khalīfa* of the Orthodox Khilāfat.

Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il was born on Saturday, the 28th of Shawwāl, 1196 A.H.<sup>2</sup> (1781 A.D.), in the village of Phulat, in the Delhi territory, from Faḥilatun Nisā, the daughter of Maulavī 'Alāuddīn, of the same place. On the death of his father, which occurred while he was very young, he was brought up as an adopted son under the care of his uncle 'Abdul Qādir. Subsequently he was married to the latter's grand-daughter <sup>3</sup> (نواسی).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad, *Āṣāruṣ Ṣanādīd*, iii, 56; Bashīruddīn Aḥmad, *Wāqī'āt*, ii, 411; and Beale, *Biographical Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Beale, *Biographical Dictionary*; Hidāyat Hosain, *Encycl. of Islam*, ii, pt. I, p. 549; and Ṭāhīr, M. *Hayāt e Ṭayyiba*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad, *Āṣāruṣ Ṣanādīd*, iv, 56; and Bashīruddīn Aḥmad, *Wāqī'āt*, ii, 411.

Muḥammad Ismā'il was possessed of good parts and high talents, and he had a very ingenious mind, and a retentive memory. As is the case generally in youth, he was not very attentive to his studies. Swimming in the river Jamna was one of his favourite amusements, and in this art he acquired so much skill that he used to cross the river occasionally swimming at a stretch. He was irregular in his attendance on his guardian and preceptor 'Abdul Qādir. From his natural talents, however, he was looked upon as 'the hope of the family,' and no pains were spared in his intellectual culture. For his obvious negligence of his studies once his class-fellows complained to their teacher. Muḥammad Ismā'il, on being questioned, opened his book at random, and began to read much in advance of his previous lesson. When he was told that it was not the place where he ought to have commenced, he said that there was no difficulty that he could not fully comprehend in the part which he had omitted. To verify his statement the teacher questioned him on a point, about which he gave such a full and masterly explanation that all the hearers were astonished. He finished his education in the fifteenth or sixteenth year of his age. The fame of his high abilities soon spread far and wide. It is said that to test his learning, some of the classical scholars would studiously meet him in the streets to prevent his having reference to books, and put him most difficult questions ; but he would answer every point so explicitly and satisfactorily that they always expressed their wonder and

admiration at his mental faculties. He had an excellent knowledge of moral philosophy, mathematics, rhetoric, logic as well as of the science of commentary (*tafsīr*) and tradition, besides a respectable knowledge of the doctrines of Islam and Islamic law.<sup>1</sup>

*Early Career 1212 A.H./1797 A.D. to  
1235 A.H./1819 A.D.*

He started in life as a preacher. He commenced preaching, in the grand mosque at Delhi, sermons in favour of the unity of God and against idolatry; and he enlightened his countrymen on the respective nature of these doctrines by composing and publishing a treatise with the title, *Taqviatul Imān*, or 'Strengthening of Faith.' From the very commencement of his worldly career he was a true advocate of his religion and was earnestly devoted to its cause. The abuses and innovations which had crept into its doctrines among the Muslims of India attracted his early attention. He found them deeply plunged in the vices of *shirk* or 'attribution of a copartner to God,' or at least heresy, the Qurān and *Ḥadīṣ* having been almost entirely neglected, and the popular prejudices having been substituted as their chief guides.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sir Sayyid's *Āṣārūṣ Ṣanādīd*, iii, 56; and Muḥammad Ja'far's *Tarīkh e 'Aḥḍā*, 143.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*, 186; Hunter's *Indian Musalmans*, 67 f.n.; and Ismā'il's *Taqviatul Imān*.

*Contact with Sayyid Aḥmad, 1235 A.H./1819 A.D.  
to 1236 A.H./1820 A.D.*

While thus engaged, his attention was aroused by the arrival of Sayyid Aḥmad at Delhi from Tonk in 1819. The Sayyid had a tolerable knowledge of the Islamic law and bore a high character as a pious man. He was the religious disciple of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, and had received his Arabic education from Shāh 'Abdul Qādir. It is asserted that it was from Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, that Sayyid Aḥmad derived orthodox religious opinions, which he subsequently promulgated, and the design which he adopted of preaching *jihād*. On his return to Delhi, he found that his teacher 'Abdul Qādir was dead, and had been succeeded in giving people literary instruction by his nephew, Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'īl. The fame of the Sayyid, who put up in the Akbarābādī<sup>1</sup> mosque,

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<sup>1</sup> This mosque was situated in the Faiḡ Bazar and was built by Izz-un Nisā Begum in 1060 A.H./1650 A.D., as the following inscription on its entrance signified :—

این مسجد فیض انتها و سرای راحت جا و حمام نظافت اما چوک  
دلکشاه که عبادت گاه حق پرستان روزگار و روح افزای متورداں اقطار و نزہت  
کده آسمانیان و دارالنفع زمینیان است در عهد سعادت مہد بادشاہ اسلام  
کہف انام سایہ والا پایہ پروردگار خلیفہ برگزیدہ کردگار رحمت اعم ذی الجلال  
مظہر ایزد دارا بیہمال ابوالمظفر شہاب الدین محمد صاحبقران ثانی  
شاہجہان پادشاہ غازی پرستار خاص بادشاہی پرستندہ باخلاص ظل اللہی  
موفقہ خیرات و مبرات مکررہ سعادات و حسنات اعز النساء مشہورہ با کبر  
آبادی محل بفرمان معلی بنا کرد و بتجہت ابتغای مرضای الہی افتدای

was great, and drew numbers of people around him. Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il also, together with his relative, Maulavī 'Abdul Ḥa'i, son-in-law of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, one day went to him purposely, when, for trial's sake, he observed that he had never yet been fortunate enough to offer his prayers with حضور قلب or 'presence of mind.' The Sayyid, with a smile, told him to come that night to his room to say the evening prayer, where he would acquire his desire. On hearing the remark, the inquisitive Maulavī grew very curious, and as soon as the fixed time arrived, he along with his companion, went to the room of the Sayyid. They were told to offer فرض 'the first portion of the prayer,' after him, and to complete the remainder separately, when they were both so deeply immersed in contemplating

ثواب اخروی و حاصل سری مکتوی بر مسجد با حقوق مرافق داخله و خارجه وقف لازم شرعی نمود و مقرر ساخت که اگر بمحرمت این امکان احتیاج افتد آنچہ از حاصل این موقوف دود بعد الترمیم باقی ماند بخدمه مسجد و حمام و طلبہ علم رسانند و الا تمام را بجماعہ سطور بدهند این منازل منیعہ در عرض دوسال بصرف صد و پنجاه هزار روپیہ آخر شهر رمضان المبارک سال هزار و شصتم ہجری مطابق بیست و چہارم حلوس عالم آرا صورت انجام پذیرفت۔ ایند تعالیٰ اجر دین خیر جاری و نفع باقی بروزگار فرخندہ آثار پادشاہ دین پرور حق گزین حقیقت گستر بانیہ این مبانی عامرہ مغانی عاید گرداند۔ آمین یا رب العالمین۔

This mosque was destroyed sometimes after the war of 1857, and its site is located to be that, which is at présent occupied by Edward Park. When the ground for this park was being cleared and levelled the foundations of the mosque were unearthed, but due to the apathy of the builders of new order in the town, this house of God was buried under dust for ever.

(Bashiruddīn Aḥmad, *Wāq'āt*, ii, 140).

God, that it was not over till the dawn of the morn appeared. This miraculous exhibition of the Sayyid's supernatural power had such effect on the mind of the young *maulavīs* that the very same morning they most willingly received religious initiation from his hands, and thereafter became his close followers.<sup>1</sup>

*Preparation and Journey for Hajj 1236 A.H./1820 A.D.  
to 1237 A.H./1821 A.D.*

This circumstance raised the fame of the Sayyid still higher, and in a short time he had numerous followers at Delhi. The chief of his first disciples and the most constant associates of all his fortunes, namely, Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il and 'Abdul Ḥa'i held him in such high esteem that they rendered him almost menial offices, running, it is asserted, with their shoes off, by the side of his palanquin, when he moved out, like common servants. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, who was then alive, advised his disciple and his two famous relatives to preach the sermon of pilgrimage and to proceed to Mecca. They followed his advice, and as the Sayyid repaired to Bareilly to make preparations for *Hajj*, Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il and 'Abdul Ḥa'i wrote letters in different directions and proceeded themselves to Phulat and Saharanpur to bring their relatives and families to join this sacred task. As the news spread, hundreds of people requested the Sayyid to take them along

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sir Sayyid*, ii, 27; and *Muḥammad Ja'far*, 16.



with him and at last on the 1st of Shawwāl, 1236 A.H. (1820 A.D.), when Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il was in the thirty-eighth year of his age, they, together with four hundred of their followers (men, women and children), after saying their 'Īd prayers in Bareilly, proceeded to Calcutta, where the Sayyid had thousands of Muslims added to his followers. The party stayed in Calcutta for three months. During all this time Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il remained busy in preaching to Muslims and broadcasting his ideas to them. An old class-mate of Maulavī Ismā'il and a learned scholar, 'Abdur Raḥīm, who had become an atheist and who believed in and worshipped the sun only, was also living in Calcutta in those days. The Maulavī expressed his intention to convert him to his ideas after seeing him. But when 'Abdur Raḥīm learnt of it, he left the town without giving a chance to the Maulavī to meet him, as he was sure that in spite of all his learning and knowledge it would not be possible for him to face Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il. After this long stay in Calcutta, the party hired eleven boats and boarded them in small groups. Landing in Jeddah and after travelling for eleven months the party reached Mecca on the 28th Sha'bān, 1237 A.H. (1821 A.D.)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sir Sayyid*, ii, 27; *M. Ja'far*, 61-64; and *M. 'Alī, Maḥẓan e Aḥmadī*.

*Pilgrimage and return, 1237 A.H./1821 A.D. to  
1239 A.H./1823 A.D.*

After performing the rites of pilgrimage, and visiting Medina, the party returned to Jeddah on the 1st Zulqa'da, 1238 A.H./1822 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

During this fourteen months' sojourn in the territory of Hejaz Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il came in contact with many learned scholars of Arabia, Byzantine, Egypt, Syria and Bulgaria, and closely studied the conditions prevailing in those countries. From Jeddah the ḥājīs reached Bombay in about a month after staying for a few days in different parts on their way back home. From Bombay the party proceeded to Calcutta in boats and remained stationed in Calcutta for over two months after spending a month on the sea. On the 29th Sha'bān, 1239 A.H. (1823 A.D.) Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il reached home after an absence of nearly three years.<sup>2</sup>

*Preaching of jihād 1239 A.H./1823 A.D. to  
1242 A.H./1825 A.D.*

The distressed and degraded condition to which the

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<sup>1</sup> It is commonly believed that after the pilgrimage the party proceeded to Constantinople, where it was received with marked consideration. Here, it is said, the party stayed for six years and the Sayyid with the help of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il, succeeded in adding largely to the number of his disciples, and acquired in presents nearly nine lakhs of rupees in cash (Mīr Shahamat Alī, *J.R.A.S.*, 13, 310). I have not been able to verify this incident from any authentic source.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Sir Sayyid*, ii, 76, 56; *M. Ja'far*, 67; and Muḥammad 'Alī, *Makhzan e Aḥmadi*, ff. 150 and 152.

Muslims of India of late had been reduced, and which, when compared with the prosperous and happy state of the nations and tribes whom he had lately visited, seemed much more deplorable, excited the patriotic zeal of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il. The relief of his countrymen from their present miserable condition was the object which wholly engrossed his attention. Moved by this laudable and enthusing motive, he travelled throughout India, and went from town to town preaching the sermon of *jihād*. Emissaries were likewise sent into the interior to prepare the minds of Muslims for a religious war. Such was the powerful force of the orations of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il that in less than two years a majority of respectable Muslims were in his favour. At Delhi he generally resorted to the Akbar-ābādī Masjid, where Sayyid Aḥmad was lodged, and daily delivered religious lectures to those who gathered around him. He also preached in the grand mosque on every Friday and Tuesday. The assembly on these occasions was generally very great; so much so that one could hardly get near enough to hear him. In short, thousands of Muslims, who, owing to the indolence of other *maulavīs*, had yet remained ignorant of the true doctrines of their religion, were reclaimed from the darkness of ignorance in which they were plunged. His rapid success, however, excited the jealousy of the contemporary divines. Apprehending their own discredit with the public from the disclosure of the truth, they were of course offended at the incessant preachings of the indefatigable Ismā'il.

Rigid criticism and malicious censures were in consequence passed by the latter on his lectures. To remove differences of opinion, a meeting of the doctors was resolved upon and held in the grand mosque to discuss the points at issue ; but the assembly broke up without coming to a decision regarding the controversy. Whatever may be the merits of the respective pretensions of the two parties, it is certain that Ismā'il continued to gain unabated reputation as a popular and true expounder of the Islamic law, and the people were convinced of the imposition under which they had hitherto laboured.

When his opponents failed to defeat him in public controversy, they often tried to mislead his followers privately by artful arguments, but the impression made upon his adherents was so great that they never went astray. Many came prepared with difficult questions, but in the very next preliminary discourse, Ismā'il generally gave such convincing and comprehensive explanations of the matter in question, that they dared not put to him any query. His opponents chiefly consisted of *maulavīs* and *khādims*, or attendants of the various tombs of Muslim saints. The revenue of the latter entirely depended on the offerings presented by ignorant visitors, and it was greatly checked by the religious instructions of Ismā'il ; and hence the *khādims* had interested motives for disliking him. The common people who had not had the chance of hearing or reading the truths disclosed by this preacher, continued to follow the old prejudices ; but such of them as came to have a knowledge of the doctrines,

continued to embrace the reform unhesitatingly.

The opposition which Ismā'il met with on the part of the *maulavīs*, gave no check to his resolute mind, but on the contrary, served to enhance still further his religious zeal. The number of his followers increased with his fame. The crowd of *namāzīs*, or sayers of prayers, was as great in his time in the grand mosque of Delhi as on the festivals of 'Ids. The truths which were disclosed by the industry of the reformer were never previously known, even to people of the first class.<sup>1</sup>

His rising influence, however, alarmed the local authorities. Maulavī Fazl e Ḥaq of Khairābād, who was the reader of the District Officer, objected seriously to the assertion of Maulavī Ismā'il, in his book *Taqwīat-ul-Imān*, that God had the power to create another prophet like Muḥammad. According to Maulavī Fazl e Ḥaq it was a blasphemy to make such an assertion. Maulavī Ismā'il very deftly responded to the objection of this *maulavī* and quoted a verse from the Holy Qurān in which God had clearly mentioned that He could create another like them (human beings) if He wished to. The verse runs as follows :—

اليس الذى خلق السموات والارض بقادر على ان يخلق مثلهم - بلى  
وهو الخلاق العليم - (سورة يسين)

“Is He who created the heavens and the earth not able to create the like of them? Nay! He is the All-Creator and the All-Knowing.”

Maulavī Fazl e Ḥaq was very much annoyed at this

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sir Sayyid*, ii, 54 ; and *M. Ja'far*, 142, 144.

elucidation of the point by Ismā'il, and with his influence and in collusion with the authorities, got the public assemblies prohibited in the mosques. Maulavī Ismā'il had, however, infused sufficient religious ardour into the minds of his followers to prepare them for the grand service which he had in contemplation. This check, however, prevented him from making any further progress in India or from carrying into effect his favourite scheme at home, as is supposed by some to have been his original design.<sup>1</sup>

*Travels, 1241 A.H./1825 A.D. to 1242 A.H./1826 A.D.*

In 1824-25, he together with his religious guide Sayyid Aḥmad, and his relative 'Abdul Ḥa'ī, proceeded to Yāghīstān *via* Sind. They passed through Thānesar, Malerkotla, Bahawalpur, Hyderabad (Sind), Shikārpur and crossing through the Dhādar and Bolān passes they moved on to Pishin, Qandhar and Kabul. At the time they left Delhi, religious enthusiasm was so great that the expedition haunted almost every mind and some ten to twelve thousand people joined them. They were also soon followed from India by small parties, who moved in disguise, making up in all a considerable number. Sir Sayyid says that more than a lakh of Indians alone flocked to his standard. They were also aided in pecuniary matters by the native chiefs and private individuals, more especially by the Chief of Tonk, who was

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sir Sayyid*, ii, 57; and *M. Ja'far*, 144.

one of the disciples of the Sayyid. In the beginning of the next year (1826 A.D.), the Ghāzīs reached the Peshawar frontier, crossing back into the Panjab through Khyber Pass without check.<sup>1</sup>

*Declaration of War against Sikhs, 1242 A.H./1826 A.D.*

Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il, along with the Ghāzīs stayed in Hasht Nagar, a place near Peshawar, for a while, and then declared a religious war against the Sikhs, by raising the flag of Muḥammad. Numbers of Afghans also joined the standard, and among the rest, Omar Khan of Panjtar was of great service to the leaders. The Panjtar family is of some consequence among the war-like Yusufzais, and as the tribe had become apprehensive of the design of Yār Muḥammad Khan, the chief of Peshawar, whose dependence on Ranjit Singh secured him from danger from the side of Kabul, the Sayyid and his Ghāzīs were hailed as deliverers, and the party succeeded in establishing its authority in the Yusufzai hills, without much difficulty. When the news reached the Lahore Court, Sardar Budh Singh, of the same family as the Maharaja, with an army of ten thousand was sent to give battle to the Ghāzīs.

*First Action against Sikhs, 1242 A.H./1826 A.D.*

The first battle was fought with the Sikhs by the Ghāzīs on the 20th Jumada I, 1242 A.H. (21st December

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ḥayāt e Taiyiba. Āṣārūṣ Ṣanādīd*, ii, 27, 56, *Tawārīkh e 'Aṣiba*, 96, 97; and *Cunningham*, 186-90.

1826 A.D.), at Akora, a place about eight miles from Nowshera when the Sikhs were defeated with considerable loss. Maulavī Ismā'il was the commander of the advance guard in this action. Although the army of the *Ghāzīs* was ill equipped, yet their success against the Sikhs added much to their fame and strength, till Yār Muḥammad deemed it prudent to enter into agreement obliging him to respect the territory of the Yusūfzais.

*A soldier till death, 1246 A.H./1830-31 A.D.*

After this action against the Sikhs the fighting career of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il began. He always led the forces of the *Ghāzīs* and came out victorious till he was surprised and fell in the last battle on the 24th Zulqā'da, 1246 A.H. (early in May, 1831), at Balakot, a place near Mansehra. where he was subsequently buried. As I am giving the details of the battles which he fought against Sikhs side by side with his religious guide Sayyid Aḥmad, in a monograph on Sayyid Aḥmad, I refrain here from repeating those facts. I shall, however, record here an eye-witness's account of the last moments of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il for your benefit. This account has come to us from Alexander Gardner,<sup>1</sup> who soon after the event he has narrated, became a colonel of artillery in the service of Ranjit Singh. It was after his wanderings

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Gardner was born in 1785 in North America, on the shore of Lake Superior, and died at Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, in 1877. He inherited an adventurous disposition from his parents. He sought first for a position in the Russian service, but accidentally lost it on the eve of attainment. Subsequently he travelled in Asia and served Afghan kings and later Ranjit Singh. Pearse, Hugh, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, xvi.



in Afghanistan and arrival in the troubled regions of the North-West Frontier of India, when he records in his memoirs, 'I arrived at Bajaur at the moment that a certain Muhammad Ismā'il had arrived from the fanatic chief Syad Ahmad with a demand for aid from the *mir*, as from all neighbouring Muhammadan chieftains. This Syad Ahmad was a remarkable man, who gave much trouble for some years to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

'Some four years prior to my arrival at Bajaur he had raised the green standard of the Prophet in the Eusafzai hills, between Peshawar and Attock, and proclaimed a religious war against the Sikhs. Syad Ahmad belonged to a family of Syads in Bareilly, and commenced life as a petty officer of cavalry in the army of Amir Khan, the great soldier of fortune. After preparing in India for the religious war which he desired to wage, Syad Ahmad entered Afghanistan; but finding no enthusiasm there, he proceeded with several hundred followers to Punjtar in the Eusafzai hills, and made that place his headquarters. This, as I have said, was early in the year 1827.

'After various vicissitudes the Syad actually became in 1830 master of the city and district of Peshawar, from which place he ousted Sultan Muhammad Khan. This prince was a brother of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan, and at this time ruled Peshawar as a tributary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the sovereign of the Panjab.

'This success of the Syad proved his ruin, for the Maharaja immediately occupied Peshawar in person, and

determined to destroy the reformer once and for all. He entrusted the task to his son, the Shahzada Sher Singh, whose operations were at first unsuccessful.

'Syad Ahmad had two faithful and trusted followers, the Maulavis 'Abdul Ha'i and Muḥammad Ismā'il, and these men strained every nerve to obtain assistance and reinforcements for their master.

'When Muhammad Ismail arrived at the Court of Mir Alam Khan the latter was in doubt what course to adopt. The religious enthusiasm of his people, and their hatred of the infidel Sikhs, impelled him to make common cause with the Syad, but at the same time he had substantial reasons to maintain friendly relations with Ranjit Singh, and more especially with the Wazir (or Prime Minister) Raja Dhyan Singh. The influence of the latter was very great throughout all the mountain regions on the northern boundaries of India.

'In this difficulty my arrival, with my trusty band of Khaibaris, was very welcome to the *mir*, and no doubt combined with his former friendship to elicit the warm reception which he gave me. He was wary enough to say nothing of his intentions to me for three or four days after my arrival, until my attention was attracted by an impassioned address which I heard Muḥammad Ismā'il deliver to a large assembly of the wild Eusafzai mountaineers. The enthusiasm which he aroused suggested to me that I might do worse than join the Syad his master, as I saw a good opportunity of getting together such a body of followers as would make my services

valuable to any ruler to whom I might subsequently offer them. Therefore, when Mir Alam Khan proposed to me to take command of those of his followers who desired to array themselves under the sacred banner of the Syad or Khalifa as he now styled himself, I fell in readily enough with his wish.

'In a few days I marched towards Balakot, the headquarters of Syad Ahmad, at the head of some 250 well-armed and warlike mountaineers, all burning with religious zeal and with the desire to work their will in the rich city of Peshawar. For rich it seemed to them, though at that time its prosperity was at a very low ebb, it having been for so many years handled about between the Sikhs and Afghans.

'As it turned out, we set out to join the holy standard just an hour too late, for the Syad and his faithful *maulvi* were slain, fighting bravely side by side, before we could join in the fight. They were taken by surprise at a place near Balakot and surrounded by a large party of Sikhs, who had crossed the river Indus on *massaks*, or inflated skins. In his anxiety to rejoin his master Muhammad Ismail had left me and my force a march behind, and, owing to the mistake or treachery of a guide, we took longer than we expected in coming up.

'I well remember the scene as I and my Eusafzai and Khaibari followers came in view of the action.

'Syad Ahmad and the *maulvi*, surrounded by his surviving Indian followers, were fighting desperately hand to hand with the equally fanatical Akalis of the Sikh

army. They had been taken by surprise and isolated from the main body of the Syad forces, which fought very badly without their leader. Even as I caught sight of the Syad and *maulvi* they fell pierced by a hundred weapons. Those around them were slain to a man, and the main body dispersed in every direction.

'With some difficulty I kept my party together, and withdrew to the hills, showing so bold a front to the Sikhs that they did not dare to follow us far. The Eusafzai mountain-passes always gave the Sikhs cholera, as Avitabile<sup>1</sup> used to say.

'I was literally within a few hundred yards of the Syad when he fell, but I did not see the angel descend and carry him off to Paradise, although many of his followers remembered afterwards that they had seen it distinctly enough.

'I remained two nights at Panchtar, where I rested my men after their exertion, and divided the booty between them. The death of the Syad broke the only link that held his followers together, and in retreat many of the parties from different regions fell upon one another for plunder. My Khaibaris and Eusafzais were equal to the best in this matter, and cut down several of the Hindustani fanatics who had joined them for protection; and whose clothing or equipment seemed to them a desirable acquisition.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General Avitabile, Ranjit Singhs' Italian governor of the Peshawar district.

<sup>2</sup> Pearse, Hugh, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, pp. 166-73. Cf. Blumhardt, *Encyclopædia of Islam*, vol. i, pt. i, Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 71; Cunningham,

The statement of Gardner eloquently testifies to the heroic disposition of the two reformers as much as it gives you an insight into the villainous character of Gardner and the treacherous nature of his followers.

*The Man : Orator, Reformer, Preacher, Warrior  
and Writer*

Such was the end of a noble genius, Maulavi Muḥammad Ismā'il, who was a man of very extensive literary attainments. He possessed a mild and manly temperament, and was simple and plain in his habits. He was an accomplished orator, and an excellent religious lawyer. His lectures were always delivered with great propriety, elegance and force, and he expressed himself with considerable care and perspicuity. He avoided superfluities, and was generally to the purpose, brief and modest, and always produced such proofs as were best adapted to enforce conviction. His biographers in Urdu have referred to a host of incidents which bear eloquent testimony to his attainments, his skill in oratory and his strength of character. I will, however, content myself with quoting a few of these to bring out the qualities of this illustrious son of Islam.

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*History of the Sikhs*, 186-90 ; *Gazetteer of Hazara District*, 27, 28 ; *Gordon*, 103 ; *Gough*, 37 ; *Grey*, 108 ; *Hughes*, 176-77 ; *Khazan Singh*, i, 310 ; *Latif*, 437-43 ; *M'Gregor*, i, 196 ; *Mohan Lal*, i, 145-46 ; *Prinsep, Origin of the Sikh Power*, 145-51 ; *Sinha*, 95-6 ; *Stulpnagel*, 29 ; *Kanhayya Lal, Zafar Nāma*, 406-426 ; *Abul Hasan 'Alī. Kanhayya Lal, Tārīkh e Panjāb*, 321-30 ; *Tāhir, and Būte Shāh*, ff. 409-412.

It was a custom amongst the women-folk of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il to offer a *ṣaḥnak* (an oblation to Faṭīma, the daughter of the Holy Prophet) annually. Some sweets were cooked and only those women were invited to partake of this feast, who had been married once only. The women who had been married again after the death of or after separation from their first husbands, were not asked and allowed to join this feast. The edibles were also not allowed to be seen by a man. After coming in contact with Sayyid Aḥmad, when, once he saw this feast being held in his home, Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il, protested against it and told his people that it was purely an innovation. His opinion was that anybody could join in eating proper food and the *ṣaḥnak* (صحنك) should not be reserved for women, who were married only once. The ladies approached Maulavī 'Abdul Qādir, the uncle and guardian of Maulavī Ismā'il, with an appeal against the verdict of the Maulavī. Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, in spite of his being a very learned scholar, only to please the ladies wanted to hush up the matter by upholding their sentimental decision. But Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il persisted in his purely Islamic view, and in defiance of all concerned, he distributed the whole of the food among poor people.

Once the wife of Sayyid Aḥmad came to him after a long interval of absence. Next morning the Sayyid was late for his prayers and did not attend the service properly. Although Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il held his spiritual guide, Sayyid Aḥmad, in great esteem as has

been mentioned before, yet for this act of negligence he did not excuse him and rebuked him publicly in the mosque saying, 'Your wife, sir, has been with you for a night and you have neglected your duty towards God. How would you account for this on the Day of Judgment?' It is said that Sayyid Aḥmad offered a public apology to his disciple promising to be careful in future. Such was the strength of character and outspokenness that Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il possessed.

During the turbulent days of his life, when he was busy in *Jihād*, Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il was once staying in a *sarāe*, where a few learned scholars of the town came to ask him certain religious questions. When they reached the *sarāe*, they saw that instead of looking like a religious inactive priest, the Maulavī had donned the dress of a regular soldier, and with a Holy Quran and a sword hanging respectively around his neck and girdle, he was busy curry-combing his horse. The scholars amazed at the spectacle got their doubts removed and the Maulavī answered their question to their full satisfaction referring to the Holy Quran for authority. Then the scholars asked him as to how he managed to satisfy all questioners without having access to his library, as obviously he was not carrying about his library. The spontaneous reply was, 'I satisfy every questioner with this book (the Holy Quran), and if he persists in not being convinced I satisfy him with this sword. In the presence of these two I do not need a library.'

From the commencement, his attention was engaged by the religious irregularities which had crept into Islam as well as the miseries of his fellow creatures in India. All his literary works, which I will discuss presently, are fraught with these of his ambitions. He succeeded in a great measure in reforming the religion, but lost his life, to the great regret of his countrymen, in attempting to alleviate their troubles

Since the times of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il India has not produced another man similarly enterprising and able. The late Dr. Iqbal used to say, 'India has hitherto produced only one MAULAVĪ, and that is Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il.' He in his admirable undertakings seemed to have no interested motive. His chief aim was to do good to the country which had given him birth. Ranjit Singh is said to have offered to him and the Sayyid a handsome *Jāgir*, if they would give up their religious expedition. The request was contemptuously rejected, and the Lion of the Panjab was told that if he would adopt their course they would ask nothing beyond it.

Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il left only one son named Muḥammad 'Umar, but the latter died in 1268 A.H. (1851 A.D.) leaving no issue behind.<sup>1</sup>

### *His Works*

Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il started writing very early in his life, and in spite of his active outdoor life he continued contributing valuable articles and books to

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<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad, Ja'far, *Tawārīkh e 'Ajjiba*, p. 150.



the cause of religion and faith. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad thinks that he wrote many books,<sup>1</sup> but unfortunately some of his works have not come down to us, on account of their not being preserved properly. Even as early as the time of Sir Sayyid all the works of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il were not traceable. From this it can be imagined how difficult it is to collect them all at this stage. I have, however, been able to have access to some of his works, which I will describe now. Some of them are printed books, mostly in Calcutta, and others are in manuscript form, although even some of these were also printed, but are not available now in that form. Besides inaccessibility to all the works of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il, it has not been possible to determine the exact dates of the composition of these works, as the author has not mentioned these dates anywhere. Still, where possible, I have tried to determine the approximate date of composition.

### 1. *Taqvīatul Īmān*

This is probably the most famous work of Maulvi Muḥammad Ismā'il, although it is a small treatise intended to lay down a perfect rule of conduct for the guidance of the Faithful. The book was composed in the neighbourhood of and earlier than 1240<sup>2</sup> A.H. (1823

<sup>1</sup> Sir Sayyid Aḥmad, *Āṣāruṣ Ṣanādīd*, pt. 6, ii, 26.

<sup>2</sup> A supplementary volume to *Taqvīatul Īmān* was written by Muḥammad Sulṭān, a disciple of the Maulavī, in 1250 A.H. (1834 A.D.), which shows that *Taqvīatul Īmān* was composed before 1250 A.H. Muḥammad Sulṭān in his

A.D.), but its exact date of composition is not known. It is written in Urdu and was planned to comprise a preface and two chapters. Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il lived to complete the first chapter alone, or that showing the extent to which the doctrines of Islam had become perverted in India. This portion has been translated into English as well<sup>1</sup> by Mīr Shahāmat 'Alī. A disciple Muḥammad Sulṭān completed the scheme by the addition of the second chapter, treating of the modes proper to be followed; but it is a lengthy and inferior production.<sup>2</sup>

work, *Tazkīrul Ikhwān* says:

اب سن بارہ سو پچاس ہجری میں اللہ تعالیٰ نے اس خاکسار گنہگار  
ہیچمدان محمد سلطان کے دلمیں ارادہ اُس کے ترجمہ کا ڈالا .....  
اور تذکیرالاکھوان نقیہ تقویتالایمان اُس کا نام رکھا (Tazkīrul Ikhwān, p. 62)

Another external evidence brings us even nearer to the date of composition of *Taqviatul Imān*. It is a letter written in Arabic by Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il to one Mullā Baghdādī, in which the Maulavī has tried to answer some of the objections raised by the Mullā to his book. This letter ends thus:

هذا المكتوب حين كذت نزىلا في الكانفور سنة الف و مائتين واربعين  
الى سيدناالبغدادى حين وسوسه الجبال بعد قراءة كتابى- (Letter, p. 269)

Obviously the book was written and circulated before 1240 A.H., because it could invite comment only after it had been released for publication.

<sup>1</sup> *J.R.A.S.*, vol. 13, pp. 316-372.

<sup>2</sup> The translator of *Taqviatul Imān*, Mīr Shahāmat 'Alī, thinks that the supplementary volume to *Taqviatul Imān*, is *as-Širāṭul Mustaqīm*, which is the subject of a paper in the *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society* for November, 1832, vol. i, p. 479. (*J.R.A.S.* vol. 13, p. 316, f.n. 1). This is wrong. Mīr Shahāmat has confused the two books, viz., *Širāṭul Mustaqīm*, which was written by Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il, and *Tazkīrul Ikhwān*, which was composed by Muḥammad Sulṭān, as a supplement to *Taqviatul Imān*. See f.n. p. 25.

In the preface of *Taqvīatul Īmān* Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il deprecates the opinion 'that the wise and learned alone can comprehend God's word. God himself said a prophet had been raised up among the rude and ignorant for their instruction, and that He, the Lord, had rendered obedience easy. There were two things essential, a belief in the unity of God, which was to know no other God, and a knowledge of the Prophet, which was obedience to the law. Many held the sayings of the saints to be their guide; but the word of God was alone to be attended to, although the writings of the pious, which agreed with the Qurān, might be read for edification.'

The first chapter, or the main portion of the book, treats of the unity of God, and in it the writer deprecates the supplication of saints, angels, etc., as impious. He declares the reasons given for such worship to be futile, and to show an utter ignorance of God's word. 'The ancient idolators had likewise said that they merely venerated powers and divinities, and did not regard them as the equal of the Almighty; but God himself had answered these heathens. Likewise the Christians had been admonished for giving to dead monks and friars the honour due to Lord. God is alone, and companions He has none; prostration and adoration are due to Him, and to no other.' Dilating upon the omnipotence of God, the writer says, 'To have a thorough control over the universe, to exercise full authority in it, to cause death or life, to extend or depress one's means, to occasion

sickness or health, to bestow victory or defeat, to effect prosperity or adversity, as well as to accomplish desires, to avert evils, to protect in the time of difficulty, and to alleviate miseries, are all the qualities peculiar to God alone ; and no other is endowed with such powers. If any one, by action or desire, attribute such influence to any of His creatures in the foregoing points, he is surely an associator of companions with God. It is called *ishrāk fit taṣarruf*, or " Association in the power of God." The transgressor will certainly be guilty, whether he considers the apostles, etc., to have been favoured with such command by God, or think that such power has been created by themselves.

The book is written in an impressive and forceful style. All the views expounded have been supported by the Qurān and ḥadīṣ. This has greatly enhanced the value of the contents and has given them a dignity, which cannot be challenged.

## 2. *Risāla e Yak Rūza*

As has been pointed out before, the publication of *Taqwīatul Imān* caused a stir in the circle of the learned doctors of religion. It was considered a bombshell on the self-coined and age-old practices, which were venerated with a religious zeal. The *maulavīs* were all aflame to hear :

اس زمانے میں دین کی بات میں لوگ کتنی راہیں چلتے ہیں۔  
 کتنے پہلوں کی رسموں کو پکڑتے ہیں۔ کتنے قصے بزرگوں کے دیکھتے ہیں۔

اور کتنے مولویوں کی باتوں کو جو انہوں نے اپنے دھن کی تیزی سے نکالی  
ہیں سند پکڑتے ہیں - (تقویۃ الایمان، ص ۲)

In order to wreak vengeance on Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il a host of *maulavīs* came forward to challenge him for his convictions, so much so that Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il had to answer their objections in black and white. This explanatory treatise which was written in response to the objections raised by Maulavī Fazl e Ḥaq of Delhi, referred to before, on *Taqvīatul Īmān*, was written in Persian in one day and hence it is known as *Risāla e Yak Rūza*. Maulavī Fazl e Ḥaq had raised three objections to a statement made in the *Taqvīatul Īmān* and these were as follows :

- (i) To say that God was empowered to create another man like Muḥammad, the Holy Prophet, was wrong.
- (ii) To utter such a thing was a sacrilege.
- (iii) To mention it is absurd.

Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il, unlike Maulavī Fazl e Ḥaq, has very calmly and studiously upheld his statement giving quotations from the Qurān and *ḥadīṣ* as his authorities. Maulavī Fazl e Ḥaq, although not satisfied by this *risāla*, was completely silenced after its publication.

### 3. *Tanwīrul 'Ainain fī 'Iṣbāte Raf'al Yadain*

In this book Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il has collected authentic traditions by which he has proved that *raf'e yadain* or 'removing the hands from the breast during

prayers' is an unobligatory *sunnat*, which may be resorted to by Muslims. But those who do not follow this practice, should not be rebuked or coerced into it, although they may not act upon it even once in their life. The author was greatly complimented by his learned uncle Shāh 'Abdul Qādir on the production of this work.

#### 4. *Ḥaḳīqat e Imāmat o Zikr e Aqsām e ū*

This work is divided into two portions and is written in Persian, describing in details the Islamic view of the office of the patriarch, the *Imām* or the head of a Muslim State. The first portion deals at great length with the Muslim conception of *imāmat*. Five qualities of a man are considered as fundamental essentials which make him fit for the guidance of the destiny of his *millat*.

They are :

- (i) *وجاهت* or 'dignity.'
- (ii) *ولایت* or 'sainthood.'
- (iii) *بعثت* or 'missionary's qualities.'
- (iv) *هدایت* or 'divine guidance.'
- (v) *سیاست* or 'administration.'

These qualities have been further explained from a purely Islamic standpoint.

The second portion contains an account of the kinds of *imāmat*. The rightful *imāmat* is described to be a close copy of the conduct of the Holy Prophet. Kingship is considered to be an un-Islamic form of government of an Islamic state. The author thinks, and rightly too, that

no compromise can be made between Islamic *imāmat* and kingship.

‘پس سیاست امانی و سیاست سلطانی را بمنزله آب شیرین و آب شور تصور توان کرد - پس هر قدر که آب شور را به آب شیرین آمیخته کنند همان قدر لذت آب شیرین پنهان خواهد گردید و حدت آب شور نمایان’<sup>1</sup>

(The kingly administration can be considered as brackish water when compared with the Divine administration, which is sweet water. To the extent that you mix brackish water with the sweet water, as much the sweet water will lose its taste and the sour taste of brackish water will become effective).

### 5. *Izāhul Ḥaqiqiṣ Ṣarīḥ*

This is a treatise in Persian on the burial of the dead. It comprises an introduction, two chapters and a conclusion. In the introduction the author has described all the un-Islamic innovations which have become part of the ritual amongst the Indian Muslims, and in the main portion of the book he has described the proper methods of burying the dead.

### 6. *Ṣirāṭul Mustaqīm*

The *Ṣirāṭul Mustaqīm* or ‘The Straight Path,’ is the most important of several treatises composed by Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā‘il in Persian. It gives the fullest account generally known of the tenets of Sayyid Aḥmad. The main object of the author in composing it was to justify the claims of Sayyid Aḥmad, as a devotee, gifted

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Ismā‘il, *Ḥaqīqat e Imāmat*, f. 91.

with a surprising degree of religious capacity and illumination. Its professed purpose is kindly to impart to the world the benefits of the experience and inspired discoveries of a saint so eminent as Sayyid Aḥmad.

### 7. *Uṣūl ul Fiqh*

It is a short treatise of 36 printed pages in Arabic. The treatise is written essentially with the object of determining the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence. Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il has successfully described in a concise way the different sources of Islamic Law with their respective importance, *viz.*, the Holy Qurān, the *sunnat*, the *ijmā'* and the *qiyās*.

### 8. *Minor Works*

Besides these important works, Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il is supposed to have written several letters, two of which are preserved. One is written in Arabic and addressed to Mullā Baghdādī. A reference has already been made to this letter. Another letter is in Persian, which is addressed to Nawab Wazīruddaula of Tonk, who was also a disciple of Sayyid Aḥmad. This letter was written during the *jihād*, exhorting the Chief of Tonk to help the *mujāhids* in every possible way he could, as the *mujāhids* were busy in a *jihād* against the Sikhs.

Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il also tried his hand at poetry, and his poems are in no way a mean achievement.



He wrote one *qaṣīda* in Persian in praise of his guide Sayyid Aḥmad, out of which I record a few verses here :

بیا و تهنیت شجره امامت کن  
 که بعد گم شدنش ماں چگونہ گشت پدید  
 هزار شکر بہ یزدان پاک کر فضلش  
 ز نور قدسی فیضش کہ قطرہ بہ چکید  
 ز فیض او بہ قلوب جمیع اہل یقین  
 ز دین ماحض حنیفی بنے عجب روئید

بداہتہً ہمہ احبار ابن زمان دانند  
 کہ زان اوست ازین عرصہ منصب تجدید  
 ہمہ کمال تو مورث ز احمد مرسل  
 کہ عرق پاک تو اوصاف پاک ازو بکشید

دریں زمان توی جای نشینی پیغمبر  
 خلیفہ و خلف و وارث و وصی رشید<sup>1</sup>

He also composed a *maṣnavī*, *Silk e Nūr* or 'Thread of Light' in Urdu. It begins thus :

الہی تیرا نام کیا خوب ہے کہ ہر جان کو وہی مطلوب ہے  
 اسی ہے ہر دل کو آرام و چین وہی سب زبانوں کا ہے زیب وزین<sup>1</sup>

### *His Teachings*

I will now pass on to tell you something about his teachings. His own life was a perfect illustration of the way he wanted other people to lead their lives. Two

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Ja'far, *Tawārīkh e 'Ajība*, p. 149.

things figure very prominently in his life and are very conspicuous in all his admirable undertakings, which were based upon no interested motives. Firstly, he had a painful feeling that innovations among the Muslims of India had sprung from association with sceptics or heretics, and with those who sin against the Unity of God. This was mainly responsible for the crumbling of the very foundations of Islamic life in India; and the whole edifice of the national life of Muslims, although it looked very magnificent, was soon going to fall down. Among the abuses to which he found the Muslims addicted he mentions the following in his works: excess of respect to *murshids* or religious instructors, the numerous innovating ceremonies, which are generally observed at tombs, and making offerings in honour of saints. He said that Muslim *murshids* had become very much like Hindu *gurus*. In India, more than in any other Muslim country Islam and کفر had been mixed like کپڑی. If the Hindus have their Gaya, their Mathura, and their Kashi, the Muslims have their Makwanpur, their Bharaich and their Ajmer. The one set builds *maṭhs* over their idols; the other, not to be behind hand, raise domes over their saints' tombs. In the *maṭhs* you will find *mahants* and *Gosains*: at Muslim shrines, *khādims*, *mujāvirs* and *pīrzādas*. He denounced all these practices. Among the most popular practices springing from reverence for saints, which he denounced vehemently, are prayers addressed to them for any particular desire or blessing, as for children, etc.,

in the supposition that their favour can in any manner, reverse the order of fate—the dedicating in vows and setting apart animals to be sacrificed as offerings to them or in honour of them, which he declares to be impiety—the making offerings of gratitude or propitiation to saints after the birth of children - and the giving to children names implying that they have been obtained through their favour; such as Nabī Bakhsh, Imām Bakhsh, Madār Bakhsh, ‘Abdun Nabī, *Banda e ‘Alī*, etc.

Secondly, the miserable condition of the Muslims of India occupied most of his thoughts. The lethargy and disgrace into which Muslims had sunk made his blood boil, and to liberate them from their serfdom to the Sikh rulers he started preaching to them of *jihād* and actually led them to one. His was an ambitious scheme. If he had succeeded, to-day the Muslims would not have felt the necessity of running after the new fangled ideas of modern civilization for their liberation. He insisted on the restoration of that order of life for Muslims, in which their life would be governed only by Islamic laws. He exhorted his followers to ‘follow no one, be he *mujtahid*, *imām*, *ghauṣ*, *quṭb*, *maulavī*, *shaikh*, *king*, *minister*, *pādri*, or *pandit*, against the authority of the Quran and the traditions.’ But it is sad to reflect that he did not succeed in his second objective.

### Conclusion

Leaving sentiment aside, the question naturally arises what were the causes which did not make these

two reformers successful in their efforts. As is obvious, they staked everything in their lives to pursue their objectives and sacrificed all their possessions in this pursuit, and yet all this ended in failure. It was not only that. The personal character of these reformers was so extremely in conformity with the Islamic mode of life that we simply wonder to find that such noble persons were defeated in the face of evil forces. This naturally requires an explanation, and if in a sentimental way we close our eyes to the dire consequences which followed the movement of these reformers, we shall be guilty of serious neglect.

To all appearances the first and most vital factor which was the cause of the failure of this movement, which was started for the regeneration of Muslims of India, was that the movement did not totally dissociate itself from the evil influences of mysticism, which is mainly responsible for the inaction of Muslims all over the world. Although Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il preached all his life against the *pīrs* and *murshids*, yet he himself professed to die a disciple of Sayyid Aḥmad. He knew the limits of this relation and managed to keep himself within these limits, but the Muslim masses neither knew the limits nor conformed to the practical code of life of Maulavī Muḥammad Ismā'il. Although the reformers had purged the old system of mysticism of all its vices, yet the skeleton was so much infected with the age-long diseases that it very soon developed them again to their old perniciousness.

The second historical fact which was the cause of the defeat of the reformers was that they had formed a wrong estimate of the field of action to which they shifted their scene of activities from the centre of India. Although there is no evidence to prove the fact, yet it is obvious that being hard pressed by the local authorities at Delhi to discontinue their activities, they thought it prudent to shift the scene of their activities to the North-West Frontier thinking that the Muslims of that place would help. Here again they had not gauged the situation properly. The Muslims of the North-West Frontier were not ready enough to accept the change of life which the reformers preached. They swallowed the remedy but with a distaste for the whole thing. They were not properly and adequately educated to comprehend the Islamic conception of life. They joined hands with them, but got rid of them as soon as they could get rid of them. Gardner has given us a true picture of the North-West Frontier *mujahids*, who came to help the reformers in *jihād*.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the reformers fallen in the battle, their North-West Frontier helpers fell on the Indian fighters and jumping at their throats stripped them naked of their last garment. This says a lot about the mental attitude of the North-West Frontier *mujahids*. To work a revolution on Islamic lines, the reformers ought to have waited long enough to prepare the ground for such a revolution. Until the Islamic outlook embraced the whole field of

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<sup>1</sup> See *ante*.

their action, they could not succeed, and they did not. I think the lines and careers of these reformers should be good eye-openers for all those who now or in future wish to work such a revolution.

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The Reaction of Muslim India to Western  
Culture in the 19th Century with particular  
reference to the Wahhabi Movement

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A NEW ERA—an era of cultural reorganization—dawned in India with the advent of the 19th Century. It was the outcome of the penetration of the West, which actually dates back to the middle of the 15th century but became effectively operative after a lapse of 200 years, when British diplomacy succeeded in the elimination of its other European rivals.

The impact of two civilisations quite alien to each other and determined by diametrically opposite ideals and concepts of values, necessitated the new orientation and the readjustment of the customs and ways of life in their intimate as well as public aspects.

The subject of this paper is how India—particularly Muslim India—reacted to this new invading culture. The problem is a complex one and not easy to answer. India is a vast continent, inhabited by different races, representing widely different cultural patterns. The degree of response, therefore, could not be uniform. Again, the different parts of the country did not come in contact with this culture at the same time, and in some provinces, as in the Punjab, the modern influences began to work only in the latter half of the century. The assimilation of the new culture was, therefore, confined in the beginning to border regions and a few pioneer individuals. It, however, spread rapidly inwards and downwards, so that it soon permeated wider and wider sections in every province.

When two alien civilisations, opposed to each other in their ideals, are forced to come in intimate contact, the problem of cultural conflict and readjustment is inevitable. Its nature, however, differs according as the invaded civilisation happens to be free from foreign political domination and is able to control the processes of cultural evolution or not. Here, too, the existence or the absence of a strong ruling body or effective leadership is a factor which is always of vital importance. In the case of national consciousness resistance to the foreign culture is, no doubt, natural ; but when the invaded culture has not the stamina to face and stem the onslaught of the invading culture, or the national spirit is somnolent and in putrescent stages of consciousness, or again it feels that it is essentially inferior and out-of-date and is inadequate to meet new and more complex situations, it either passively submits to the new civilisation or consciously but independently replaces its own social and political institutions by new forms and new ways to avoid the greater danger of political subjugation.

Cultural response under these circumstances always represents one of the two main types, that of "centralised control" as in the case of Japan and Turkey, where a nationwide adaptation to the new civilisation was rapidly imposed by a strong ruling class, or that of "diffused assimilation and permeation" as in China. Here the cultural adjustment takes the form either of unconscious adaptation through what may be called "long exposure" or of conscious reform effected through

persuasion and education under the guidance of national leaders. The process is no doubt slow, piecemeal, sometimes wasteful and often lacking in co-ordination, but it always has the advantage of being voluntary and evolutionary and has no fear of such disasters as were witnessed in Afghanistan during the regime of Amanullah Khan.

The problem of India, however, is unique. The first to come in contact with the West, it is not only politically subordinate to the invading culture, but represents within itself varied cultural patterns, of which the Hindu and the Islamic are the major. The Muslims, who had been on the downward path, both politically and morally, during the 18th century, suddenly awakened to their serious situation in the beginning of the 19th century, simultaneously with the penetration of the new culture, and offered serious resistance to it. For the Hindus, who had been politically subordinate for about a thousand years and whose values, at the time, were governed by economic considerations, it was a matter of choice between two foreign cultures, and they, therefore, willingly yielded to the new. But even in their case the problem of cultural readjustment was by no means so simple. Wedded to the time-old traditions which had acquired religious sanctity, they were not willing to accept any modification in their institutions, and thus the Government had to legislate to put an end to those more hideous and revolting as Sati, infanticide and human sacrifice. In other cases; reform was effected

through gradual assimilation. The type of response, therefore, was the combination of "centralised control" and "diffused penetration and permeation."

The foreign domination also affected the cultural response and conflict of the Hindus and the Muslims in another way. Imperialistic considerations for the perpetuation of political dominance necessitated that the Muslims should be made to go down and the Hindus be encouraged to rise up. To effectively secure the object the Muslims were debarred from all offices till in the words of Bayley they could not hope for "any post above the rank of porter, or filler of inkpots and mender of pens." There was thus no economic motive with them to acquire the new education.

Further, the Muslim educational institutions were denuded of funds which were misappropriated on the largest scale for the education of the Hindus. I refer to two such funds. The Mohsin Fund of Calcutta and the Itimaduddaula Fund of the Punjab.

The policy of the Government did not stop here. The Muslims were excluded from the Oriental journals and libraries. The Court of Directors ordered that no money should be spent on research in Semitic culture and Dr. Roer, in charge of the Asiatic Society from 1847—52, and after him Wilson, Goldstucker, Aufrecht, Hall and others rigorously enforced it, so that Arabic was completely ignored. Their activities were devoted to Sanskrit, and the Muslims were led to believe that their culture was in danger of extinction. The resistance of the



Muslim to the new culture was, therefore, based not on their bigotry and narrow-mindedness, but was partly the outcome of the policy of the Government and partly due to the religious reformation and national awakening brought about by *Shams-ul-Hind* Shah Abdul Aziz and others.

It is generally given out that the Muslims being conservative were averse to progress and advancement, whereas Hindus, who were helpless during the Muslim regime, found their opportunity and availed themselves of it to the fullest extent. So much currency has been given to this wild allegation that even the Muslims believe it to be true. The allegation is absolutely baseless and insults our ancestors. The truth is that this myth is the concoction of the British Imperialists, who as a result of the change of their policy towards the Muslims and Hindus wanted to justify their conduct towards the Muslims to convince them of their *bona-fides*. These Imperialists realised that because of their policy of the suppression of the Muslims and the encouragement of the Hindus, the latter had acquired, quite contrary to their expectations, a political consciousness which was likely to be dangerous to British interests. The whole political situation was examined, particularly the "Targhib-i-Muhammadiyya" Movement, and here is the finding of E. C. Bayley, C.S.I., Secretary to Government of India, Home Department, in the sixties. After discussing at length the policy of the Government towards the Muslims and the Hindus, he says "Is it a subject of

wonder that the Musalmans have held aloof from a system which.....was in its nature unavoidably antagonistic to their interests and at variance with all their social traditions? The educated Muslim sees himself practically excluded from the share of power and of the emoluments of Government and sees these and all other advantages of life passed into the hands of the Hindus.

“The Government has failed in its duty to Muslims. They are decaying under British rule. Any answer based on their own degeneracy is a *petitio principii*, for their degeneracy is one of the results of our political ignorance and neglect. To this day they exhibit at intervals their old intense feeling of nationality and capability of war-like enterprize; but in all other respects they are a race ruined under British rule. Is it that Hindus have all along been better men than Muslims and only required a fair field in order to outstrip in the race? No. The Hindus under Muslim rule accepted their fate exactly as they have done under our own. At present preferment depends upon a knowledge of English and they learn English. Formerly preferment depended upon a knowledge of Persian and they learnt Persian. It was not till a knowledge of Persian became profitable to them under the orders of Todar Mal that it became general among them. When, therefore, we introduced English into the public offices, the facile Hindu immediately mastered the language necessary to his success in life. The former language of public business under the Muslims and the new one under ourselves, were alike

foreign tongues to him. He was equally indifferent to both, except as a means of preferment. With the Muslims the case was altogether different. Before the country passed to us, they were not only the political but the intellectual power in India. They possessed a system of education which was capable of affording a high degree of intellectual training and polish. During the first seventy-five years of our Rule we continued to make use of this system as a means for producing officers to carry out our administration. But meanwhile we had introduced a scheme of Public Instruction of our own; and as soon as it trained up a generation of men, all Hindus, on the new plan, we flung aside the old Muslim system, and the youth found every avenue of public life closed in their faces. Musalmans did not accept this change. An ancient conquering race cannot easily divest itself of the traditions of its nobler past."

It is therefore incorrect to say that Muslims did not acquire new culture and learn English because they believed that it was *Kufr* to learn English. They resisted the new culture because of much weightier considerations, political, national and religious, and in support of this I refer to the *Fatwa* of *Shams-ul-Hind* Shah Abdul Aziz, the intellectual head of the movement, which led the opposition to the new culture. The *Fatwa* reads: "Learning English for the purposes of reading books, writing letters, and knowing the secret meanings of words, is permitted. But if any man learns English in order to unite himself with the English, he sins and

transgresses the law ; even as in the case of a weapon of iron, if the weapon is made for driving away thieves or for arresting them, then the making of it is a pious act ; but if it is made to help or defend the thieves, then the making of it is sinful."

I have already mentioned a little earlier that the Muslims had suddenly awakened to a sense of their political situation in the beginning of the 19th century and offered serious resistance to the new culture, appreciating its full implications. This awakening was due to the religious reformation and national consciousness brought about by *Shams-ul-Hind* Shah Abdul Aziz and his followers Sayed Ahmad Brelvi and Shah Ismail Shahid and others whose memory we are celebrating today.

The Mughal Empire had been decaying in India ever since the death of Aurangzeb (1707), but so effective had been his control that it was not perceptible during the reign of his successor. It was, however, shaken to its very foundations when Nadir Shah sacked Delhi in 1739. The distant provinces like Hyderabad and Oudh declared their independence. The Mahrattas were already independent in the south. The Sikhs became more turbulent in the Punjab and Ranjit Singh carved out a kingdom for himself by taking advantage of the generosity of Shah Zaman. During the years 1772-1785, the period of the premiership of Mirza Najaf Khan, the sun of fortune emerged from the storm clouds of the mid century and cast a pale evening glimmer upon the Mughal throne. Then it finally went down behind the

thundercloud of the Rohilla invasion and amid the blinding lightning glare of Ghulam Qadir's ferocity. The Emperor was blinded and dethroned and the royal ladies subjected to the grossest insults. The rescue came from the Scindhia who assumed a protectorate over Delhi and thus reduced the Mughal enclave to the level of a puppet sovereignty.

At this time the British diplomacy under Lord Wellesley sought to utilise the Mughal name in the war with the Mahrattas. The Emperor, who was far from happy under the Scindhia, welcomed Lord Lake's army when it entered the capital in 1803, and with it ended the Empire of Akbar. The farce was, however, kept up, for though rulers *de facto*, the English did not deem it politic to assume the status of rulers *de jure*. It was feared that any haste in the assumption of the insignia of sovereignty would result in the rising of the Muslims, it being their duty to shake off the infidel rule. India was, therefore, allowed to pass from a Country of Islam into a Country of the Enemy by absolutely imperceptible gradations.

Sir William Hunter refers to this policy in the following words: "The early servants of the East India Company perfectly understood their position, and when they first took over the provinces, they left the Mohammadan Administration absolutely undisturbed. They retained the Muslim code as the law of the land, appointed Muslim Law Officers to carry it out, and in the smallest matter, as in the greatest, acted merely in the

name of the Muslim Emperor of Delhi. They were afraid of assuming the insignia of sovereignty and pretended to be the deputies of a Muslim monarch. The truth is, that had we hastened by a single decade our formal assumption of the sovereignty, we should have been landed in a Muslim rising infinitely more serious than the Mutiny in 1857. The whole status of the Muslims would have been suddenly changed. We should have been in the position 'of an Infidel power who had seized and occupied a Country of Islam. The great majority of the Indian Muslims would have deemed it their absolute duty to rebel; for the first obligation 'of every man, woman and child,' in such a case, 'is to hurt and drive away the Infidel Ruler'."

The admirable moderation of the East India Company's servants, and their determination to let Muslim power expire by slow natural decay, without hastening its death a single moment, averted this danger.

There were some, however, who were acute enough to detect the change. Most important of these was the family of the famous "Muhaddis" Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi. A profound scholar of liberal views, he was deeply impressed with the refrigeration of religious emotions and the decay of the Muslim power and started the great movement of Muslim regeneration and reformation with his famous book *Hujjat-ullah al-Baligha* (1735), and his translation of the Quran in Persian (1737). His sons, Shah Abdul Aziz (d. 1824), Shah Rafi-ud-Din (1749-1818) and Shah Abdul Qadir (1753-1815) followed in his

footsteps. Shah Waliullah wrote *Izalat-ul-Khifa* and two of his sons translated the Quran into Urdu. Sayyed Abdulla, one of their devoted disciples, published the translation of Shah Abdul Qadir in Hugli in 1829, and thus for the first time the Muslim masses in India were able to understand the text of their Holy Book. Great was the change it wrought. Islam began to awaken from the lethargy in which it was sunk. The movement, called "Targhib-i-Muhammadiyya" generally known as Wahhabi movement, became a vitalising force by the beginning of the 19th century under the leadership of Shah Abdul Aziz.

Gifted with uncommon insight he detected that the Muslim rule was imperceptibly disappearing. He was agitated about the relation which the Muslims were to have with their non-Muslim rulers. He arrived at the conclusion that the change of the status of the Musalmans had automatically brought into play a new set of obligations on their part, and the first of these obligations was the expulsion of the foreigners, for the Holy Quran is based upon the conception of the Muslims as a conquering and not a conquered people.

Having arrived at this decision the course of his action was clear. Finding that the success of his cause required an enthusiastic and fiery spirit at its head to galvanise people into activity, he converted Sayyed Ahmad Brelvi (born 1786) a Pindara Chief and sent him forth as a preacher after a three years' noviciate. Shah Ismail, the son-in-law and Shah Abdul Haye the nephew

of Shah Abdul Aziz, both scholars of great merit, publicly accepted Sayyed Ahmad as their spiritual guide and as a man sent by God to accomplish the task of Muslim regeneration and liberation. This attracted popular attention to the future leader. An extensive tour was arranged in 1820. The apostle journeyed slowly from Delhi to Calcutta. A protracted halt was made at Patna, where the movement was organized on the lines of a regular Government. Four Caliphs and a high priest were nominated by formal deeds in different parts of the country and an agent was appointed in every district with regular officials to go forth and collect taxes. Patna was made the headquarters of the movement. By the end of the year the movement was on a sound footing with an organisation as complete and thorough as that of an established government. The movement so far was purely religious and contemplated moral reformation.

The teachings of the new apostle were simple. He abstained from all doctrinal discussions and devoted himself exclusively to practical problems of everyday life, exhorting his hearers to live better lives, to believe in the Unity of God and the Equality of man, and to discard the superstitious accretions which they had borrowed from the Hindus. It was an attempt to restore Islam to its pristine simplicity.

In 1822 Sayyed Ahmad went to Mecca and came in contact with Wahhabism, a similar movement of reformation started in Arabia by Abdul Wahhab of Najd, in the middle of the 18th century, to revive Islam as a



living force.

In Mecca he attracted the notice of the authorities who were opposed to Wahhabi movement. He was publicly insulted and expelled. The result was that he was no longer a religious visionary and a reformer of superstitious abuses. He became a devoted follower of the Arab leader. Coming back to India he gave up mere preaching. He felt that something bold was to be undertaken to regain Muslim glory. His efforts from now on tended in two directions: to reform Islam from within and to restore the Muslim political power by expulsion of the English and the repudiation of European influence.

In the words of Hunter, "Whatever was dreaming in his nature now gave place to a fiery ecstasy, in which he beheld himself planting the crescent throughout every district in India. Whatever was indistinct in his teaching, henceforth assumed the precision of that fierce, formulated theology, by which Abdul Wahhab had founded a great kingdom in Arabia, and which Sayyed Ahmad hoped would enable him to rear a still greater and more lasting Empire in India." With this object in view he made the grim determination to expel the Sikhs from the Punjab and the British from the rest of India at whatever expense of the blood of the infidels and at whatever sacrifices of Muslim life. He started with the intensification and vitalisation of religious life and roused the Muslims to self-consciousness and national and political rebirth.

Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Abdul Haye gave

" Fatwas " that India was no longer "Dar-us-Salmar" but was " Dar-ul-Harb ", and that it was the duty of every Muslim to expel the intruders. The Fatwa of Shah Abdul Aziz was delivered in the following words : " When Infidels get hold of a Mohammadan country and it becomes impossible for the Musalmans of the country, and of the people of the neighbouring districts, to drive them away, or to retain reasonable hope of ever doing so ; and the power of the Infidels increase to such an extent, that they can abolish or retain the ordinances of Islam according to their pleasure ; and no one is strong enough to seize on the revenues of the country without the permission of the Infidels ; and the (Musalman) inhabitants do no longer live so secure as before ; such a country is politically a country of the Enemy—Dar-ul-Harb." The Empire of the Christians extends from Calcutta to Delhi. This is the country of the Enemy, for idolatry (Kufr and Shirk) is everywhere current, and no recourse is made to our Holy Law. Whenever such circumstances exist in a country, the country is " Dar-ul-Harb."

Every Musalman was called upon to declare his faith ; to state, in the face of his co-religionists, whether he would or would not contribute to the Mujahidin's Camp on the Frontier and to elect, once and for all, whether he would play the part of a devoted follower of Islam, or be a subject of Queen Victoria.

A mass of literature was produced and in the words of Hans Kohn everywhere the Muslim population was

stirred to its depth. A number of popular songs were also composed to intensify the spirit of national consciousness and to impress upon the hearers that it was the first duty of a regenerate to lay down his life for his cause. The following lines from one of the songs indicate the nature of the appeal :—

“ War against the infidel is incumbent on all Musalmans ;  
 make provision for it before all things.  
 He who from his heart gives one farthing to the cause  
 shall receive hereafter seven hundredfold ;  
 He who both gives and joins in the fight, shall receive  
 seven thousand-fold from God ;  
 He who shall equip a warrior in this cause of God shall  
 obtain a martyr’s reward ;  
 Cease to be cowards ; join the divine leader, and smite  
 the infidel.  
 Thousands go to war and come back unhurt ; thousands  
 remain at home and die ;  
 You are filled with worldly cares and have forgotten your  
 Maker in thinking of your wives and children ;  
 How long will you be able to live with your wives and  
 children ? How long to escape death ?  
 Fill the uttermost ends of India with Islam, so that  
 no sounds may be heard but ‘ Allah Allah ’ ”.

The effect of the movement was great. It roused the Muslims from the stupor in which they had sunk . . . To quote the official report, “ Every village, indeed almost every family, followed the example of their leaders and contributed to the cause of the holy war.”

After having prepared the ground Sayyed Ahmad went away to the North-West Frontier in 1824 to operate from that base. Vicegerents were appointed in the main centres of India. Regular ecclesiastical taxes were levied on all and were paid with an eagerness and zeal unknown in history. The recruitment to the army of liberation was organized on a sound basis and there was never any shortage of men. Properly to appreciate the magnitude of the task of the leaders and its difficult nature, it is to be kept in view that the recruitment and all that it involved was done secretly, for the life of every member of the movement was forfeit to the crown.

The Jihad was actually started in Bengal by Titu Mian *alias* Nisar Ali *Shahid* of Chandpur. He met with great success, routed the British forces in a number of battles and in 1831 proclaimed the extinction of British rule and the re-establishment of the Muslim power. He was, however, fighting against great odds and gave his life for the cause on the battle-field.

The main centre was the North-West Frontier. Here the movement met with great success and Peshawar was occupied in 1830, a crushing defeat having been inflicted on the Sikhs. The leader was, however, greatly handicapped by the feuds of his allies, the Tribal Pathans. He did his best to bring about unity in them. The whole of his life was one continuous struggle to re-conquer India for the Muslims. He and Ismail Shahid both died in 1831—martyrs to the cause. Even his enemies

had nothing but admiration for him. Says Hunter : " His whole soul yearned with a great pain for the salvation of his countrymen and his heart turned singly to God."

Sayyed Ahmad was, however, fortunate in the selection of his Patna Caliphs Walait Ali and Inayat Ali. The other prominent leaders were Molvi Ahmad Ullah and Abdul Ghafur, the burser of propaganda at Patna. Sayyid Umar Shah was the leader of the frontier. He fell a victim to the dagger of a treacherous member of Utmanzai Tribe in 1858. His successors were Mohammad Ishaq, Mohammad Yaqub, and Molvi Abdullah. They were men of indomitable zeal and strength of will and once more raised the sacred banner from the dust. They covered the whole of India with their emissaries, and as Hunter remarks " brought about one of the greatest religious revivals that has ever taken place—a revival which kept alive the spirit of revolt against the British rule during the next 50 years." Karamat Ali of Jaunpur and Zainul Abidin of Hyderabad, two of the prominent missionaries, visited southern India also and raised such a hurricane of enthusiasm that even women cast their jewellery into the common cause.

The movement culminated, so far as India proper is concerned, in the so-called Mutiny of 1857, which in the words of Hans Kohn, was in fact the nationalist war to secure independence.

The movement, however, did not die with the Mutiny, but lived underground, as is revealed by the Ambala Trials of 1864, and these show that the Punjab

was not behind the other parts of India. Yahya Ali the chief priest, Zafar Ali of Thaneswar, Mohammad Shafi, a wholesale butcher of Delhi, Abdul Ghafur of Patna, A. Rahim, Ilahi Bakhsh, Hussaini, of Patna, Qazi Mian Jan, Abdul Karim, Hussain of Thaneswar and Ghafur stood this trial. They were betrayed by a Punjabi soldier of the Indian British Army who joined the party as a spy. The result of the trial was a foregone conclusion. To be a member of the movement was a capital offence. What type of men were these heroes of Islam? Let their great enemy Hunter answer: "Time after time when the cause seemed ruined, they again and again raised the standard of holy war from the dust. Careless of themselves, blameless in their life, supremely devoted to the overthrow of the English Infidels, admirably skilful in organising a permanent system for supplying money and recruits, the Patna Caliph stood forth as the type and example of the Sect. Much of their teaching was faultless, and it has been given to them to stir up thousands of their countrymen to a purer life and a truer conception of the Almighty. Certain it is that the Wahhabi Missionary furnishes, so far as my experience goes, the most spiritual and least selfish type of the sect. Devoted to the one great work of purifying the creed of Mohammad, a Wahhabi knows no fear for himself and no pity for others. His path in life is clear, and neither warnings nor punishments can turn him to the right or left." These are the sons of Islam whom our so-called religious priests call *Kafir* and I shall presently show why?

The British Imperialists realized that such a movement could not be crushed by mere force and joined their heads to find out ways and means to counteract it effectively. There were quislings in Muslim society then as they are today in Europe. The British Imperialists knew that the established Government could always rely on the vested interests. These were represented by the landed, monied and priestly classes. The British imperialists, therefore, turned towards them, and successfully. "A whole phalanx of Fatwas was procured," says Hunter, declaring the Wahhabis to be Kafirs and liberating the Muslims from the dangerous duty of rebelling. Well-to-do classes headed by K. B. Abdul Latif of Calcutta formed the Mohammadan Literary Society, Calcutta, and on 23rd November 1870 the law was discussed by the Ulema and verdict was given in favour of the British. Another Mullah named Abdul Haye secured a similar Fatwa from Mecca. The British diplomacy thus triumphed. The Muslim landholders and clergy were made to believe that their interests were safe only if the movement failed. The result was, as Hunter puts it, that "every Musalman priest with a dozen acres attached to his mosque or wayside shrine began to shriek against the Wahhabis and continued shrieking for 50 years." The Muslim land-holders also maintained the cause of the mosque, precisely as English land-holders defend the established Church, for any form of dissent, whether religious or political, is perilous to vested rights and Wahhabis are extreme dissenters

in both respects. They could not find favour with any section of comfortable classes and the clergy. The descendants of these Peers and Mullahs still regard these Mujahidin and Martyrs to be Kafirs, because of the Fatwas issued against them by their ancestors. I can only say that this is due to their ignorance. May God show them light.

The second measure adopted by the British Imperialists was to change their policy towards the Muslims. Government services were opened to them and every possible encouragement was given to induce them to join English Educational Institutions. I need not discuss these efforts in this paper. The object was to counteract the Targhib-i-Muhammadiyya movement, for it was found, in the words of Bayley, that every Muslim youth coming out of the British Educational Institutions was lost to his religion. Here, too, the British diplomacy triumphed. But the great movement never died. Today it lives in the colony of the Mujahidin in the North-West Frontier, and who knows the future.



# A REGENERATOR OF MUSLIM SOCIETY

*by*

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IT is a matter of no small surprize that hordes of followers entered the fold of Islam in a very short time, and the rapidity with which it spread to the remotest corners of the known world, not only as a religion but also as a great political power, is still more wonderful. Islam has its own system of Government. To the world it gave new divine laws—social, economic, political, cultural and military. Islam's message was not a totally new one. It was a developed, perfected and final form of all the divine messages preached by Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. The Prophet Muhammad—May God bless him—preached the same message—the message of peace through belief in the Unity of God. This doctrine is the fundamental principle of Islam. Belief in one God and negation of all others is the foundation stone of Islamic teachings. The Holy Quran lays the greatest stress on Oneness of God. On embracing Islam one has to declare : “No god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet.” All the battles fought by the Holy Prophet were in defence of the right to preach this doctrine. Later on the extension of the Muslim empire was to make the believers in the Unity of God strong enough to freely preach monotheism as taught in the Quran.

With the extension of the boundaries of the Islamic Empire a multitude of foreign elements were introduced in Islamic beliefs. People entered the fold of Islam, but did not quite forget their pre-Islamic customs

and superstitions. The result was sad. Monotheism as preached in the Book and practised by the Prophet could not remain without taint. Moreover, party feelings and sectarian views led to innovations and leader worship. This spirit gave rise to the visiting of holy shrines and saint-worship. In course of time, Muslim masses lost sight of the pure conception of the Unity of God as it was taught in the Quran and preached by the Prophet. Hence arose heresies and corruptions.

Quite a large number of the *Ulema*, in every age, denounced the superstitious practices of the masses, purging Islam of the heresies and innovations, condemning offerings, vows, invocations and pilgrimages to holy shrines. Superstitious practices and customs, purely un-Islamic in character and origin, were strongly combated by the doctors of divinity. Though every Muslim leader had been doing his best to enforce the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet and to eliminate everything having the least taint of polytheism, Umar ibn Abdul Aziz (61—101 A.H.) stands most prominent among such *Ulema* and *Amirs* who endeavoured to restore Islam as it had been preached by the Prophet. We cannot ignore the most valuable services rendered by the great Imams and famous traditionists to uphold the cause of the oneness of God. In every age and in every country there existed heroes of Islam who made the greatest sacrifices for boldly adhering to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and for manfully declaring the real conception of monotheism in its pristine purity. These heroic soldiers of truth

faced with courage even the wrath of kings. They did not shirk their duty or any sacrifices the task entailed. The wrath of mighty rulers could not daunt them, nor could the opposition of the mob-minded public stand in the way of their glorious march. This group of happy warriors always took great delight in undergoing hardships and privations in the noble cause of *Tawhid*. Among these veterans of Allah's Unity the most outstanding figures are Imam Abū Hanīfa (80—150 A.H.), Imam Mālik (95—179 A.H.), Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (164—241 A.D.), Imam Shāfi'i (150—204 A.H.), Imam Bukhārī (194—256 A.H.), Imam ibn Taymiyya of Harrān (1263—1328 A.D.), Imam ibn Hazm of Spain (994—1064 A.D.), Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind (971—1034 A.H.), Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1114—1176 A.H.), Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhab of Najd (1703—1792 A.D.), Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly (1201—1246 A.H.) and Shah Ismā'il Shahīd (1193—1246 A.H.) These and many other true sons of Islam made ceaseless efforts to revive the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, to enforce the Quranic monotheism and to eliminate foreign elements from the Islamic faith. The four *Imams* are noted for their courage and feared not to speak the truth even in the courts of mighty emperors. As to Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Hazm, who can ignore their sacrifices? The story of the hardships and privations that fell to the lot of Mujaddid Alf Thānī, Shah Waliullah and Shah Ismail Shahīd is no longer a secret. The task before these reformers was no less arduous. Wrath of the ruling princes, opposition from the selfish leaders

and self-interested *Ulema* and displeasure of the illiterate masses were in store for any reformer who wanted to see Iṣlam purged of the heretical superstitions and polytheistic views prevalent in the Muslim society.

Self seeking *Ulema* had always been corrupting and misleading the Muslim masses as well as the Muslim rulers. As in the past, they still have a firm hold on the uneducated masses. It makes the already arduous task of a reformer doubly more so. The path before the reformers is very clear. They are not prophets, but do possess prophetic vision and sound judgment, daring and boldness, clear conscience and understanding, and the spirit of leadership. Whereas a prophet follows the divine word revealed to him direct, a religious reformer follows the Prophet. A reformer makes an estimate of his work. He first tries to understand his surroundings, then chalks out his programme accordingly. His primary duty is to revolutionise the views of the people. This intellectual revolution goes far to prepare the ground for the bigger events. He preaches and propagates his views and produces a good literature. He throws himself body and soul in his work. He not only eliminates evils, superstitious practices and innovations, but also makes endeavours to enforce the divine law and to establish the kingdom of God on earth, as desired in the Quran and the Sunnah, by creating a purely Islamic government. To this noble end his efforts are directed ceaselessly. He never shirks any sacrifice for the cause of *Tawhid*. He will readily lay down his life even. He

is bold, daring and straightforward. Above all, he is most uncompromising with everything un-Islamic.

In this connection one thing should not be ignored. It is not essential that every reformer should pass through all the stages and must reach his final goal—the domination and supremacy of Islam by the establishment of a theocratic government. He may work like Imam Ibn Taymiyya and Mujaddid Alf Thānī—the former died in jail but upheld the prestige of the Islamic doctrines as preached by the Prophet, and the latter defied the Mughal emperor Akbar who oppressed the Mujaddid simply because the pious man did not suffer the heretical views, polytheistic beliefs and un-Islamic customs that were propagated by the Mughal emperor—or he may pave the way like Shah Waliullah for the holy war to be conducted by Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly and Shah Ismail Shahid, or he may succeed like Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhāb of Najd who established an empire governed by the Quran and *Sunnah* of the Prophet and not by human law.

We come to a most important period in the history of Islam in India. It is an unfortunate fact that Islam as a political force came to India through the Khyber pass and not direct from Arabia, the cradle of Islam. No doubt, the Muslim explorers and invaders from Arabia came to India as early as the reign of Uthman (644—656 A.D.), even during the caliphate of Umar the Great (634—644 A. D.) and succeeded in conquering large portions of the country under the able leadership of Walid ibn

Abdul Mālik (705 - 715 A. D.), but their influence was short lived. Later on, Muslim conquerors, who came to India from the North-West left permanent marks in the country. With very few exceptions, these rulers themselves were in little touch with Islamic teachings. In the course of time the Muslim masses lost sight of the original sources of the Faith—the Quran and the *Sunnah*—and thus Islam lost its pure form in India. Disbelief and polytheistic views continued to creep into the Muslim society, until corruption reached its climax in the time of the Mughal emperor Akbar, except for the untiring efforts of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind who upheld the cause of Islam by strongly protesting against and emphatically refuting and denouncing the anti-Islamic religious beliefs initiated by the Mughal Prince. Though the Mujaddid of Sirhind was made to suffer great hardships for preaching Islam in its puritanic form, his labours were crowned with success in the time of Jahangir and Shahjahan.

Lethargy of the leaders, selfish motives of the interested *Ulema* and cold indifference of the ruling princes towards Islam had given rise to corruptions in Muslim society. The masses were ignorant. Rulers and scholars lacked real sense of duty towards the Faith. People forgot the Quranic conception of the Oneness of God. Heresies became prevalent. Invocations, vows, offerings and pilgrimages to holy shrines and saint-worship became the order of the day. The Islamic conception of Allah, the Sustainer, the Cherisher and the Provider was totally



absent from the minds of the people. In practical life there was little difference between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. The Muslims were Muslim in name only, whereas the whole structure of Muslim society was absolutely un-Islamic in spirit as well as in character. In social life, in customs and manners they resembled Hindus. Luxurious Court life had totally sapped the energy of the Princes. They were fit for nothing. Learning was a thing of the past. Scholarly criticism was an unknown science. Tyranny and oppression ruled everywhere. Strictly speaking, not only India but the whole Muslim world was plunged deep in darkness and ignorance. The Muslims were no better than the people of the dark ages of pre-Islamic Arabia where nothing but corruption and evil reigned.

In such a state of society was born Shah Waliullah (1114—1176 A. H.) of Delhi. The Muslim empire was being swept away by European traders. In every phase of life degradation and demoralisation were eating into the vitals of the Muslim society. One is really astonished to see the nature of the work done by this great reformer and scholar in that period of decay and corruption. A glance at his stupendous work and vast erudition fills one with astonishment and wonder. The great genius as he was, Shah Waliullah tackled every branch of learning and pronounced his views on every topic of the day. His writings mark him out as a first rate critic with a keen sense of observation and insight. He was extremely original in his criticisms. In his *Izālatul Khifā*

Shah Waliullah has depicted the decaying Muslim society of his day and has very critically traced the foreign elements in the various phases of their life. In a scholarly manner he has dealt with the spirit that was working in sectarian views and in the blind following of sectarian leaders. He diagnosed the causes of the lethargy of the scholars and leaders of thought in later Islam. He boldly condemned and denounced the sectarian spirit that had split Islamic community in schismatic groups. He is greatly pained to see the community divided and neglecting the injunctions of the Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet. He was intrepid in his attack against the religious leaders who misled the community. He strongly protested against every evil and addressed the people of every walk of life, *Ulema*, mystics, scholastic theologians, philosophers, craftsmen, traders, soldiers and the nation as a whole; all fell alike under the lash of his denunciation. He expressed his conviction in the most forcible terms, without any fear of the consequences. He declared that pilgrimage to holy shrines at Ajmer and other places, vows, offerings, invocations to saints and the intercession of the dead persons were sheer idolatry. In his condemnation and denunciation of the evils and corruptions prevalent in the Muslim society Shah Waliullah never cared for any danger to his person. His writings on every subject—political, economic, social, cultural, historical, philosophical and religious—bear the stamp of originality.

So far the Holy Quran had been a sealed book for the common people. Shah Waliullah was the first Muslim in India to feel the urgent need of rendering the Book into a language understood and spoken by the people of the country. Accordingly, he translated the Quran into Persian. It was the first attempt to bring the masses into close contact with the teachings and the message of the Quran. Afterwards, Urdu versions appeared through the labours of his sons.

The principles which inspired Shah Waliullah did not perish with him. After his death the work of regeneration of the Muslim society on purely Quranic lines was taken up by his four sons, particularly by Shah Abdul Aziz.

Ground was thus being prepared for the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. Shah Ismail (1193—1246 A.H.), the grandson of Shah Waliullah, was born and brought up with family traditions of vast erudition and great scholarship and with a burning passion for the revival of Islam in its pristine purity. He saw his environment and made an estimate of the work lying before him. The entire society was corrupt. Moral and intellectual stagnation combined with religious and political degradation had undermined the very foundation of the Muslim community in India. Ancient glory had departed, power had gone and empire had become ancient history. The whole country was being rapidly brought under sway by the foreigners.

The condition of religion was worse. Despite the ceaseless efforts of Shah Waliullah and his four sons, there was little awakening in the community. Instead of worshipping one God the so-called Muslims worshipped many idols they had set up in different forms and various shapes. Hindu customs and manners had however the major share in shaping the Muslim society. The community not only believed in saints, but adored their relics, visited their tombs and prayed for their intercession. The task that awaited the reformer was stupendous.

Shah Ismail started his work by preaching the simple doctrines of the faith. He elucidated the Quranic conception of the Oneness of God. Allah, he said, is the only authority to resort to in all our affairs ; and it is He alone Who can grant our prayers. He is the Provider, the Sustainer and the Cherisher of the whole creation. It is Allah alone Who makes us fall ill and grants recovery. Riches and poverty lie with Him. He alone has the power to grant children, male or female. Prophets and saints are but His creatures. All are His servants. Shah Ismail emphatically condemned saint-worship, pilgrimage to holy shrines, vows, offerings and invocations to saints. He denounced the institution of *Pīrs* and *sūfis* in the Muslim society in forceful terms, and made a strong protest against the heresies and innovations which were eating into the vitals of Islam. He boldly declared that Allah alone should be worshipped and bowed before. No authority, however great it may be, is worthy of worship.

All people, including prophets and saints, are but creatures of God. He clarified the real conception of Islamic monotheism as well as the status of the Prophet in Islam. In brief, he preached the Quran and the *Sunnah* everywhere, in and outside the mosque.

Political downfall had brought intellectual slavery in its train. The already existing spirit of blind imitation became epidemic. Like numerous other corruptions under the influence of the Hindus, the Muslims had practically abolished widow re-marriage. In addition to disobedience of God's commands in the Quran, the departure from the *Sunnah* had given rise to countless evils and corruptions in society. Shah Ismail with all the force at his command took the matter in hand and once again revived this healthy practice.

Islam was and is a religion of equality, fraternity and justice. But intellectual slavery had introduced the caste system in Islam and created an ever-widening gulf, not only between man and man, but between God and man as well. The system of *Pirs* and Sayyids had drawn a line of demarcation between a *Pir* and a *Murid*. Sayyids and *Pirs* were just like Brahmins, and the other people no better than the Shudras or untouchables of the Hindu society. Shah Ismail declared that all the believers formed one brotherhood, and there was no place in Islam for any distinction of caste or race. All the Muslims were equal in the sight of Allah. In Islam nothing counted but personal merit based on personal efforts. The only difference was as between a pious man and

an impious man, a doer of good and a doer of evil. But no social distinctions based on birth or wealth had any sanction.

Similarly, certain occupations and trades, like tanning, shoe-mending, etc., had come to be looked down upon as something unclean or base. Shah Ismail brought home to them the dignity of labour. Every lawful trade and occupation, he declared, that enables a man to maintain himself and his dependants, is respected and honoured in Islam. Thus Shah Ismail did his level best to purge the Muslim society of India of all the heresies and corruptions.

A still bigger and more tremendous task awaited the regenerator. The social reformer and religious preacher was to play the roll of a political thinker and soldier. He was to complete the work initiated by his grandfather Shah Waliullah and promoted by Shah Abdul Aziz. It was the work of regenerating the society by infusing military spirit into it and of restoring the Islamic Caliphate. The way was paved. Intellectual revolution had brought political awakening in its wake. Political awakening was now to give birth to the idea of a kingdom governed by the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

The leaders we have mentioned had been closely watching the decline and fall of the Mughal Empire. The events that had ushered the downfall were before their eyes. Shah Waliullah did endeavour but could not fully prepare the ground for a holy war. Nevertheless, he did express his readiness to take up arms and go to the

battlefield if the time were ripe. (*Tafhīmāt*, Vol. I, page 101). Similarly, Shah Abdul Aziz was a very staunch supporter of making preparations for war against the non-Muslim rulers.

Shah Ismail always kept the object in view. On one hand he continued regenerating the Muslim society by preaching the Quran and the *Sunnah*, and on the other he ceased not preparing plans and brooding over military operations. He took regular training for an armed conflict. When he realised that his efforts in the direction of beliefs were bearing fruit, he set out on a tour of the country for the organisation of the community, collection of funds and recruitment of soldiers. For conducting the war he appointed Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly as the leader.

Here it may be pointed out that Shah Waliullah had not watched the political events in the country without any apprehension. He did feel the decay of the Mughals. He did not close his eyes to the political domination of the British traders. He was undoubtedly a staunch believer in the establishment of Islamic Empire purely on the lines of Abū Bakr and Umar's Caliphate. He was, as quoted above, ready for *jihād* against the non-Muslim rulers. But the ground was not prepared and the community was not ready.

Shah Ismail, emboldened by the success of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhāb in Najd, readily selected the theatre of war. Bālākot was chosen. Muslim soldiers from all over India began to assemble there. Taking into con-

sideration the aims and objects of Shah Ismail Shahid, the choice appears to have been the best one. In accordance with his ancestors' views, the Shah had conceived the idea of creating Pakistan in India. For the accomplishment of this object there could be no better choice than a hilly place, with a strategic position, situated in the North-West Frontier.

He bravely fought against the Sikh rulers of the Punjab. His war was a purely religious one. He had no personal motives whatsoever. The only object was to regenerate the Muslim society by the establishment of Islamic caliphate. This movement for the first time aimed at Pan-Islamism. But unfortunately, due to the treachery and betrayal of some of his disloyal followers, the Shah was slain and his cause failed.

Some people are of opinion that the failure of the Shahīd was due to the wrong choice of the theatre of war. There are other people who object to his first attack on the Sikhs and not on the English. But these people ignore the facts. If the political history of India is critically studied and the different powers struggling for supremacy are surveyed, the true posture of affairs will be understood. The British were stronger than the Sikhs. They had a vast territory under their control. Being in possession of the seaports they could be easily reinforced from outside the country. Muslim forces were smaller in numbers and lacked both experience and military equipment. Sikh rule was confined to a limited area. The Sikhs had little hope of help from outside.



If the Muslim forces were to fight in Delhi, they could be easily besieged and could not get any help from anywhere. Bālākot was chosen to unite the North-Western Frontier, the Punjab and Sind, and to fight the Sikhs with reasonable prospects of success. Thus, on one hand Ismail Shahid wanted to create Pakistan and on the other to purge the country of the foreigners by putting up a strong and united opposition.

If Shah Ismail had not been betrayed by selfish people, the history of India as well as of Islam would have been totally different. It is a hard fact that Ismail's expedition did fail. But no one can deny that this great Martyr of Islam left a permanent mark on the history of the regeneration of Islam. His was the first attempt to regenerate Muslim society and to establish an Islamic Government purely on the lines of the orthodox Caliphate. He did away with pre-Islamic customs, abolished superstitious practices and eliminated social corruptions. His call was "back to Muhammad—may God keep him and bless him—and back to the Quran". To the Muslim community he gave the idea of Pan-Islamism and laid the foundations of Pakistan with his own life blood. Though Shah Ismail Shahid is dead, the ideals he died for are alive. He has wielded great influence on posterity. Jamal-ud-Din Afghani, Mufti Muhammad Abduhu of Egypt and several other political, social and religious reformers are but echoes of his genius.

Long live his ideals !



THE FIRST STANDARD-BEARER  
*of*  
ISLAMIC REVOLUTION IN INDIA

*by*

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Men who have brought about revolutions in the world have always been of two kinds. Either they were great soldiers, or they possessed a fiery and persuasive tongue by force of which they could change and revolutionise the hearts of men and nations. The Moslem Society of India is no exception to this general rule. But the Moslem revolutionaries and reformers have been characteristically possessed of the sterling qualities of both head and heart. If they had a forceful pen in the one hand, they held a mighty sword in the other. They were as great soldiers in the field of action as reformers in the domain of morality.

Among the Moslem revolutionaries of India H. S. Ismail Shaheed occupies the foremost place. He took up a movement which was purely Islamic in character and aimed at the glorification of Islam. The ways and means he adopted to gain the object were also Islamic to the core. His primary aim was not to set up Moslem rule in India, but to establish the "Kingdom of God", a Kingdom based on truth, justice, peace and godliness. Its chief object was to ennoble and uplift humanity and to raise them to a higher plane. How far he succeeded in his endeavours is not the point in question. We have to see if in the whole history of Islamic revolutions in India is there anybody else who has fought his way so gallantly and fiercely for the attainment of such a great ideal.

*Birth & Education*

He was born in 1193 A.H. His father Shah Abdul Ghani was the son of Shah Waliullah Dehlavi. H. Shah Abdul Aziz was his uncle. His father was a great scholar of Islamic sciences and well-versed in theology and sufism. Shah Ismail received his elementary education from his father. But as he lost his father in his childhood, he came under the charge and guidance of his renowned uncle Sh. Abdul Aziz. The teacher, a great scholar, was immensely pleased at having him as his student, a student of great promise and bright future. He was intelligent and brilliant. The natural result was that he not only acquired excellence in Islamic and religious sciences, but also gained a footing in all other sciences of the age. His biographers are unanimous that apart from the religious sciences, he was adept in Philosophy and Mathematics. His love for geography was so great that he would pore over the map of India for hours and hours.

*A great writer and a fine speaker*

God had gifted him with a facile pen and a forceful and persuasive tongue. He could win over the most hard-hearted and indifferent men. He had a fire of passion for the glorification of Islam burning within himself, that kindled the hearts of those who came to him.

### *Love of Hardships*

As he had to lead a great revolutionary movement, he was not content with his literary attainments. He wanted to be a true man of action and acquired high proficiency in all sorts of martial exercises. He was a fine rider, a clever marksman, a fearless lancer and a skilful wrestler. He was such a wonderful swimmer that he would sometimes swim down the Jamna to Agra and return to Delhi. The love for hardship and suffering in him was so great that in summer he would walk in the burning courtyard of the Jama Masjid of Delhi for hours together. He would neither eat nor sleep for nights together to acquire the power of forbearance.

### *Glorification of the Word of Allah*

All his soldiership and literary achievements were directed to one thing alone, that is, to re-establishing the glory of the Islamic banner. He wanted to extricate the Moslems from the sufferings and degeneration which had fallen upon them as a result of poverty, illiteracy and loss of political power. When he put his hand on the pulse of the nation he found that they were steeped in ignorance, misery and helplessness. The loss of political power had totally crushed their spirit. They had no life in them. But he knew it full well that in order to bring about unity of thought and unity of action in them it was at first essential to uplift their morals. True moral courage can work wonders. Then it would be easy

to inspire them with the great ideal and rally them under one banner. He knew that untrained minds and undisciplined intellects could win a victory if they were roused to action by a passionate appeal, but they would not be able to keep it and guard it for long. In view of this he went from place to place delivering lectures and sermons and instructing the people as to how to guard themselves from sin and violence. He called them towards God and His Prophet. He wanted to free them from the age-long shackles of schisms, irreligious observances and polytheistic customs and superstitions. His passion for moral reform was so great that he would go to harlots and prostitutes and preach to them the teachings of God and His Prophet. But it was not easy to uproot these filthy ideas which had been rooted there for years. So he was opposed, scandalised, libelled, and was made the target of fanatical oppression. But the true reformer bore all these sufferings with a smile on his lips. No oppression and disgrace could swing him even an inch from his lofty ideal. At last his preachings bore fruit and the Moslems were roused from slumber and ignorance. They realised their weaknesses and wanted to reform themselves. As a result of Hazrat Shaheed's preachings hundreds of widows married for the second time and thus obeyed the commandment of Allah. They gave up sin, violence and superstitions. Brothels and gambling houses were abolished. Their hearts were changed and now they adored the names of Allah and His Prophet.



*Intuition and knowledge of divine things*

Meanwhile he became the disciple of Hazrat Shaheed Maulana Syed Ahmad Saheb Brelvi. At that time he was the acknowledged Imam of theosophy, revelation and knowledge of divine things. Shah Shaheed sat at his feet and traversed the various stages of spiritualism under his guidance and soon attained perfection in the occult science too.

*The Crusade and Martyrdom*

At last the time arrived when the climax of the efforts was reached. With his spiritual teacher he went to the Punjab and started a crusade against Raja Ranjit Singh. Their fight was not directed to conquering the Sikhs for subjugation. They aimed at the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Hazrat Shaheed had imbibed these revolutionary thoughts and ideas from his illustrious grandfather and uncle. Hazrat Abdul Aziz, his uncle, had gone so far as to declare India as Dar-ul-Harb, though the last of the Mughal rulers was still sitting on the throne of Delhi. So my firm conviction is that Shah Shaheed and his party actually wanted to establish peace, justice, and the Kingdom of God on earth. It may be asked why their revolutionary ideas at first found a field of operations in the Punjab. The reason is that they knew that after conquering the Punjab they could

proceed to the N. W. F. Province and thus set up a large and powerful Moslem bloc, and after this they could go ahead with their Islamic ideal without resistance and opposition. Secondly, the tyranny and oppression of Raja Ranjit Singh had created a great stir and commotion among the Moslems of the Punjab, where religion and traditions were in danger. Shah Shaheed and his party were long watching for an opportunity to throw a spark into the magazine. They took advantage of this uprising and declared a crusade against Raja Ranjit Singh. By his firmness and patience, valour and intrepidity in the battlefield, Hazrat Shaheed revived the memories of Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed, Haidar-i-Karrar and Tariq bin Ziad. At many places he won victories. But unfortunately fate had something else in store for him. The misfortunes of the Moslems were not over. They had more hardships and sufferings to pass through. And hence this Islamic campaign also met with the same fate as those of Sultan Tipu in Mysore and Siraj-ud-Daula in Bengal, and the causes of failure were everywhere the same.

Victory and defeat are things of destiny, and God alone knows what was hidden in the defeat. But if you cast a glance on the splendid efforts of Hazrat Shaheed, you will not find in the whole history of Moslem India a greater hero of the nation. On the one hand he was fighting against the moral evils of his age with his pen and tongue, and on the other he was riding in the battlefield with a naked sword. Such sterling qualities seldom

combine in a single personality. He had no love for riches or fame. He was a true servant of God. He wanted to raise the banner of Allah, and submission to the will of God in him was so great that when his head was cut off every drop of blood that fell was crying : —

جان دی دی ہوئی اسی کی تھی  
حق تو یہ ہے کہ حق ادا نہ ہوا



# A DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

*by*

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Towards the close of the eighteenth century the political horizon of India was full of smoke and confusion. Only a few decades before, Nadir's invasion had left the Mughal ruler broken and India half desolate. The political affairs of the country had become more intricate owing to the mental and spiritual degradation of the Indian Muslims, a direct result of power and pelf, with the least care to exploit the fabulous wealth of India for constructive purposes of life.

The history of the post-Mughal period, dark and dismal as it is in its significance, is not singularly devoid of such men as cared about Islam and Muslims. The name of Shah Waliullah is one which alone shows that the progress and growth of Muslim culture had not been entirely extinguished. The idea of reconstruction of society or re-capture of power got further strength when Sayyid Ahmad (born 1786 A.D.), of Rae Bareilly, who was a religious disciple of Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi, and Shah Ismail Shahid of Delhi (born 1778 A.D.) rose to grasp the new meaning of life, that is to gain control over circumstances and wrest political power, the basis of all reconstruction. It appears from the life events of the two Sayyids that they were motivated by a hope that Islamic faith and history of this great religion impart to its followers. It was a noble effort that they made to replenish the exhausted reservoir of energy as Islam is wont to do through inspiration of those who come to the

fore as leaders of the nation.

The two great Sayyids who set before themselves a gigantic task inspired by a new vision have a history of their own, which is as stirring as the story of adventures of any great military genius, but it is a closed book consigned to a secluded shelf, and Muslim India has not yet realized its actual significance. The life events of the Sayyids are intertwined, but herein we are concerned only with the character and exploits of Ismail the Martyr, who with great courage, vigour and lofty ideals has shown us the way to the glory of self-sacrifice. Shah Ismail Shahid, as he is called, was the grandson of Shah Wali Ullah, the famous Traditionist, born in 1778 A.D. in Delhi and was the dearly beloved nephew of Shah Abdul Aziz. As a boy he showed signs of a great future, and was particularly noted for sharp memory and taste for books. He soon acquired a good standard of education with a fair introduction to philosophy, mathematics and geography, which subjects, unfortunately, are not cared for by the present-day maktabas. He was at the same time interested in horse-riding, tent-pegging, swordsmanship, archery, fencing and many other arts of physical culture. He was a great expert in swimming, and it is said that he used to swim from Delhi to Agra and back to Delhi in the river Jamna. He was also accustomed to acquiring immunity to hardships ; for instance he walked bare-foot on the sun-scorched floor and exposed his body to the sun for hours, which practices were to enable him to go to the

battle-field as a full-fledged soldier of unusual character. It appears that in Ismail Shahid the deteriorated spirit of the Indian Muslim was trying to recoup its health. Surely that was the way to adapt himself to circumstances and to rise up to great adventures. Not only did the poor Mughals lose the empire, but their physical health also gave way because they forgot the evil influence of the Indian climate and circumstances, that something indescribable which paralysed through the ages the great dynasties that came to rule this vast sub-continent. Ismail Shahid was manifestly learning to protest against the circumstances. He also assumed full control over his own self, when, as his biographers tell us, he could sleep and wake at will, a fact which shows that the great man first became the master of his own little state of the self, as Aristotle calls it, and was then inspired to secure control of the bigger political state.

As the ground had been prepared by Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz, Syed Ismail first diverted his attention to the reform of Muslim society and was opposed even by Maulvi Fazl-ul-Haq, an eminent man of letters of the day, and the matter was brought to the notice of Akbar Shah. A far nobler part was played by Sayyid Ismail Shahid, the right hand man of Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly, in the story of Jihad of the latter's followers during the twenties of the 19th century on the North-Western Frontier. As a group they passed through Southern Punjab, reached



Kandhar and thence proceeded to Kabul, ultimately entering the Punjab through the Khyber Pass. They were engaged in many a skirmish, and sent messages to Bukhara, Badakhshan and Kashghar. After considerable success, Sayyid Ahmad decided to retire into the Kashmir mountains, owing to the disloyalty of some Muslims. He was on his way chased by the Sikhs to Balakot where he had guarded himself. A deadly conflict took place there, and the Muslim fighters in the name of Allah met the enemy with traditional martial courage. The corpses of Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismail were discovered amongst the slain. Such is the chivalrous end of the two great Muslims who guided by a burning desire to exalt the name of Allah and to elevate the condition of His people from a quagmire of degradation and ignorance laid their lives at the altar of sacrifice.

Nadir Shah came, plundered and went away. Ahmad Shah Abdali broke the rising Hindu power and went back; but the Mughal was weakened as a consequence, although men like Nawab Abd-us-Samad had done much to keep the situation well in hand, but they were political men; the Sayyids were, on the other hand, guided by the torch of Islam and in the height of their ideals and freshness of ideas, they have left for the present generation a precious heritage. While circumstances have changed and new problems have arisen, Ismail Shahid beckons us from the secluded heights of Balakot to rise above the low and narrow view of life and

aspire to power, prestige and progress as the great Himalayas suggest.

“He defended the Islamic Faith with the courage that a lion gathers to defend its cubs, and in the expression of truth he cared neither for a javelin nor for an arrow.”











